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Sanatan grp removes Sai Baba statues from temples in UP

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Tata's AI Express completes merger with AIX Connect

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SPORTS

Mayank to lead K'taka in first two rounds

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SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in www.magzter.com 2 OCTOBER 2024 | WEDNESDAY | BENGALURU | 28 RABI'L, 1446 AH Vol 4 | Issue No 249 | Pages: 9

MUDA cancels sale deed of 14 plots given to CM's wife

Siddaramaiah says wife Parvathi is a victim of 'politics of hate'

BENGALURU, 1 OCT

Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) on Tuesday decided to take back 14 plots allotted to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi BM, following her decision to relinquish their ownership and possession. The MUDA has ordered to cancel the sale deed of these plots.

Siddaramaiah questioned Enforcement Directorate (ED) for slapping a money laundering case against him in the MUDA 'scam' and again ruled out his resignation.

Siddaramaiah also alleged that his wife was a victim of 'politics of hate' against him.

Lokayukta police on Tuesday surveyed the land, instead of which 14 sites were "illegally" allotted to his wife in Mysuru. Social activist Snehamayi Krishna—on whose complaint the Lokayukta police has registered an FIR—his wife and two others, were also present at the site. He also appeared before Lokayukta, following the notice issued to him by the investigating officers.

Krishna has also been summoned by ED on 3 October with all the documents pertaining to the alleged MUDA scam.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Hours after the ED booked Siddaramaiah in a money laundering case, his wife on Monday wrote to MUDA conveying her decision to return the plots stating that no site, home, asset and wealth is bigger for her than her husband's respect, dignity, honour and peace of mind.

ED registered an Enforcement Case Information Report, equivalent to an FIR.

Parvathi's letter conveying her decision to return them was personally submitted to MUDA Commissioner AN Raghunandan's office by her son and MLC Yathindra Siddaramaiah.

He said: "My stand was to fight without bowing down to this injustice but my wife, who is upset with the political conspiracy going on against me, has taken a decision to return these sites, which has surprised me too." On BJP's contention that the offer to surrender the sites by his wife amounts to accepting the wrongdoing in the case, he said: "How is it acrime or even a confession when someone decides to discard something saying that they don't want controversy? " —*PTI*

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> **Since the case is under investigation, we will take legal advice before making any decision. The Authority will act as per the provisions of the law on Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi's decision to surrender the plots**
>
> —AN Raghunandan, MUDA Chief

> **Will the case be closed after I resign? They are unnecessarily demanding my resignation. Why should I resign when I have not committed any wrong?**
>
> —Siddaramaiah, Chief Minister

People wait in queues to cast their votes during the third phase of Jammu & Kashmir Assembly elections in Bandipora, J&k **PHOTO: PTI**

Voting concludes with turnout of 68.72% in J&K

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

The third and final phase of polling held in the seven districts of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir concluded peacefully on Tuesday with a record voter turnout of 68.72% percent till 10 pm, according to the Election Commission of India. With this, the polling has come to an end with results scheduled on 8 October.

As per the data shared by the ECI, Udhampur saw the highest poll percentage of 72.91, followed by Samba 72.41 per cent, Kathua 70.53 per cent, Jammu 66.79 per cent, Bandipora 64.85 per cent, Kupwara 62. 76 per cent and Baramulla 55.73 per cent. The ECI said in a press release that the polling for the Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly elections concluded today in a peaceful and celebratory atmosphere.

"The elections were a resounding statement in favour of democracy in line with the CEC Rajiv Kumar's vote of confidence given during the announcement of the general elections in J&K on 16 August," the release said.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar said that "J&K Assembly elections have marked a significant deepening of democracy, which will echo in the pages of history and continue to inspire a democratic spirit of the region for years to come.

"Polling percentage has increased by 12.97 per cent in Pulwama AC in the Legislative Assembly Elections 2024 compared to the corresponding elections held in 2014. Zainapora AC in Shopian saw a 9.52 per cent increase while Eidgah AC in Srinagar registered a 9.16 per cent increase, reflecting growing confidence in the electoral process," the release stated. Phase-1 and Phase-2 saw a polling percentages of 61.38 per cent and 57.31 per cent respectively. —*ANI*

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West Pakistan refugees vote for 1st time

RS Pura, 1 OCT

In a historic moment for West Pakistan refugees cast their vote for the first time in J&K assembly after 77 years. According to records, 5,764 families of WPRs settled in various parts of Jammu after escaping West Pakistan during the Partition in 1947. —*PTI*

All geared up for Women's World Cup

The ninth edition of the tournament features 10 teams battling it out in 23 matches that will be played in the heat and humidity of the UAE.

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Situation not normal with China near LAC: Army

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

The situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh is stable but sensitive and not normal, Chief of Army Staff Gen Upendra Dwivedi said on Tuesday on the dragging military standoff between China and India in the region. Though "positive signalling" is coming out from the diplomatic talks between the two sides on resolution of the row, the execution of any plan depends on the military commanders on the ground, he said. —*PTI*

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Medicos resume protest in WB as demands not met

KOLKATA, 1 OCT

In continuing protests over the rape and murder of a medic at Kolkata's RG Kar hospital, thousands of people on Tuesday walked a 5-km stretch in the metropolis, shouting slogans and carrying placards, demanding justice for the doctor. The rallyists, under the banner of Joint Platform of Doctors, walked in a procession from College Square to Rabindra Sadan along JL Nehru Road, calling for safety and equal rights for women. "Our protests will not end till we get justice. Today, we have come together on the eve of 'Mahalaya" said Sayantani Mallick, a doctor who was part of march. —*PTI*

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PHOTO: FREEPIK

Bengaluru researchers find 63 new insect species

BENGALURU, 1 OCT

The ICAR - National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources (ICAR-NBAIR) based in Bengaluru, Karnataka has said it has discovered 63 new insect species in 2023-2024, significantly enhancing scientific understanding of agriculturally-important insects. ICAR-NBAIR said in a statement it was granted five patents in the last financial year, further establishing its leadership in innovative pest management solutions, including -- Herbal-based repellent for termites on woody trees, Protocol for alcohol-free plywood-laced melon fly attractant, and 'Dorsa Lure', a plant volatile composition to increase the trap efficiency in mango fruit flies. ICAR-NBAIR also commercialised 47 technologies, including microbial pesticides, pheromones, and insecticidal formulations during the year. —*PTI*

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India tame timid B'desh

India triumphed over Bangladesh by 7 wickets in Kanpur on Tuesday, and clinched the series 2-0. The Men in Blue now extended the lead in World Test Championship standings

BANGLADESH	INDIA
233	285/9 Declared
146	98/3

India won by 7 wickets

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SC to lay down demolition guidelines

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

Supreme Court on Tuesday said it will lay down pan-India guidelines on demolition of properties and any religious structure in the middle of a road, be it a 'dargah' or a temple, "has to go" because public interest is paramount.

A bench of Justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan said unauthorised construction made by any person, irrespective of his religion or belief, has to be removed.

The bench said its 17 September order, which had said there will be no demolition of properties till 1 October without its permission, will continue till it decides the matter.

"Whatever we are laying down, we are a secular country. We are laying it down for all the citizens, for all the institutions, not for any particular community," the bench said.

"On the first day we had pointed out, if there is any religious structure on the middle of a road, may it be a 'dargah' or some temple, it has to go because public safety and public interest is paramount," it said. The bench suggested there should be a time window of 10 or 15 days between the order of demolition and its implementation. —*PTI*

Rape convict Ram Rahim gets 15th parole in 4 years

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh, the leader of Dera Sacha Sauda and rape convict walks out of jail once again following Election Commission of India's approval of his parole request. This marks his third temporary release in the past nine months and brings his total to 15 since his conviction four years ago.

During the time of his parole, he will not be allowed to enter Haryana, or take part in any election campaign activities.

The release comes just ahead of the 5 October Haryana Assembly polls.

He is serving a 20-year sentence for raping two of his disciples. He was sentenced to life imprisonment along with four others in connection with a 20-year-old murder case of the sect's former manager, Ranjit Singh. He was held guilty of hatching a criminal conspiracy with his co-accused. —*Agencies*

Ram Rahim **PHOTO: PTI**

Activist Wangchuk, 120 others detained in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk and several others who were detained at the Delhi border while marching to the capital to demand Sixth Schedule status for Ladakh on Tuesday launched an indefinite fast at police stations where they have been kept.

Wangchuk was leading the march, 'Delhi Chalo Padyatra', which began from Leh a month ago. He and around 120 others from Ladakh were detained on Monday night.

The march was organised by Leh Apex Body (LAB), which along with the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), has been spearheading an agitation for the past four years to demand statehood for Ladakh, seek its inclusion under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, early recruitment process along with a public service commission for Ladakh and separate Lok Sabha seats for Leh and Kargil districts.

The activist and others have launched an indefinite fast at the police stations where they have been kept, the representative said. —*PTI*

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Commercial LPG up ₹48.5 per cylinder, ATF cut by 6.3%

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

Jet fuel, or ATF, price was on Tuesday reduced by 6.3 per cent to its lowest level this year, while the rate of commercial LPG used in hotels and restaurants was hiked by Rs 48.5 per 19-kg cylinder in the monthly revision done in line with international oil price trends.

Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) price was cut by Rs 5,883 per kilolitre, or 6.29 per cent, to Rs 87,597.22 per kl in the national capital, according to state-owned fuel retailers. This is the lowest price of jet fuel this year. Alongside, oil firms increased the price of commercial LPG by Rs 48.5 to Rs 1,740 per 19-kg cylinder.

This is the third straight monthly increase. Prices were hiked by Rs 6.5 per cylinder on 1 August and by Rs 39 on 1 September The three rounds of increase follow four monthly price reductions.

PHOTO: PTI

Commercial LPG now costs Rs 1,692.50 per 19-kg cylinder in Mumbai, Rs 1,850.50 in Kolkata and Rs 1,903 in Chennai. The rate of cooking gas used in domestic households, however, remained unchanged at Rs 803 per 14.2-kg cylinder. —*PTI*

PROBE HALTED

AP DyCM begins 11-day penance in Tirupati

TIRUPATI, 1 OCT

Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan on Tuesday embarked on a three-day visit to Tirumala as part of his 11-day penance to propitiate Lord Venkateswara over the alleged adulteration of Tirupati 'laddus'.

"This is not just about one prasad issue (laddu adulteration). Maybe it came out. Maybe this was a triggering point to initiate this. Prayaschitta Deeksha (penance) is (the) commitment to take forward Sanatana Dharma (Hinduism) protection. (It) is very essential. That is the order of the day," Kalyan told reporters while leaving for Tirumala.

According to the actor-politician, temple desecrations occurred continuously in the past five years under the previous YSRCP regime.

Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan performs purification ritual at Kanaka Durga Temple on Tuesday **PHOTO: X**

Highlighting that alleged desecrations should be addressed at a different level, the Janasena founder said his penance has entered the 10th day and after renouncing it tomorrow, a declaration would be released.

Meanwhile, Andhra Pradesh DGP Ch Dwaraka Tirumala Rao on Tuesday said that the state government constituted Special Investigation Team (SIT) will temporarily stall its probe as the matter is sub-judice in Supreme Court.

Another fresh PIL was filed in Supreme Court seeking a CBI probe into alleged use of animal fat in making Tirupati laddus.

The PIL was filed by KA Paul, a social activist and President of organisation 'Global Peace Initiative', seeking a "comprehensive investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). —*PTI*

Mock rescue drill

Railway Police Force and NDRF jointly conduct a mock drill as part of their training session to rescue people during train accidents inside the tunnel bridge at the Indian Railways Institute of Disaster Management in Bengaluru on Tuesday
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Peenya-Nagasandra Metro to be curtailed tomorrow

BENGALURU, 1 OCT

Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) has announced a partial curtailment of services on Green Line between Peenya Industry and Nagasandra metro stations on Thursday. The curtailment from 10am to 2am is to facilitate a statutory safety inspection of the newly constructed extension from Nagasandra to Madavara by Commissioner of Metro Railway Safety (Southern Circle). During this period, metro trains will only operate between Peenya Industry and Silk Institute stations on Green Line. The last train heading to Nagasandra before the disruption will leave the Silk Institute station at 9am. The inspection is a key step toward opening the extended section between Nagasandra and Madavara to the public. There will be no changes to the metro operations on the Purple Line. *—Salar News*

City police cracks theft cases, arrests rowdy-sheeters

BENGALURU, 1 OCT

The Rajagopalnagar police arrested six people on 30 September for their involvement in a fatal assault case in Laggere, Bengaluru. The arrests were made following a complaint filed by Narendra, also known as Das, a rowdy-sheeter from Nandini Layout. According to the police, the incident occurred on the night of 26 September around 11.15 pm, at a house on 4th Cross, Laggere, Kapilanagar when Narendra and his friends Vikrama alias Vicky, Shivu, Darshan, and Bharat were having dinner. A group of men namely Ramesh alias Paitlu, Tejas alias Tiger, and Manjunath alias Mooti, accompanied by Arun and Dixit, barged into the house and launched a deadly assault with weapons due to old enmity. In another case, three people were arrested on 23 September near Tumakuru by the police for stealing gold and diamond jewellery worth Rs 1.09 crore in Maruti Extension. *—Salar News*

Traffic curbs in Doddanekkundi for 3 months

BENGALURU, 1 OCT

In view of road infrastructure development and whitetopping by Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), traffic restrictions will be in force in Doddanekkundi and nearby areas under HAL Airport Traffic Police Station limits for three months. Starting from Wednesday, all types of vehicles will be restricted on Doddanekkundi Main Road from Doddanekkundi junction near Sri Rama Temple toward Outer Ring Road. To facilitate smooth traffic flow, alternative routes have been established. Vehicles approaching Doddanekkundi Junction from Outer Ring Road can divert via Nisarga Extension Main Road, proceeding toward Doddanekkundi Post Office and then onto Ambedkar Colony Main Road to reach Doddanekkundi Main Road. Conversely, vehicles travelling from Doddanekkundi Junction to Outer Ring Road can take Ambedkar Colony Main Road, Doddanekkundi Post Office Road, and then connect via Nisarga Extension Main Road to reach their destination. *—Salar News*

CM's wife proved wrongdoings: BJP

BJP terms CM's wife's move as 'political drama'

BENGALURU, 1 OCT

State BJP Chief BY Vijayendra on Tuesday said the decision of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi BM to relinquish the ownership of 14 plots amounts to his official acceptance of wrongdoing in the MUDA 'scam' and demanded his immediate resignation.

Vijayendra termed her move a "political drama" and alleged that it was aimed at "escaping from legal hurdles".

"I feel that Siddaramaiah, who used to claim before people of the State that he has done no wrong, who accused the Governor of acting as a puppet in the hands of Delhi (Central government), today if that Siddaramaiah has decided to retu-rn the sites, it is only to escape from the legal hurdles and to gain political sympathy, and also against those within in his party who are ready to challenge him," Vijayendra said.

Noting that when Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot gave approval for investigation based on private complaints against the Chief Minister, Congress President, Ministers and leaders had made allegations that his decision was politically motivated and that he was acting as the puppet in the hands of the central government, Vijayendra demanded that before resigning as Chief Minister, Siddaramaiah should apologise to the Governor.

He also urged the Home Minister and the Director General of Police to immediately ensure proper police security to social activist Snehamayi Krishna on whose complaint Lokayukta police has registered an FIR against Siddaramaiah, his wife and two others, claiming that there were reports about "conspiracies" against him. "Snehamayi Krishna, who is from Mysuru, when accused Siddaramaiah of corruption, complaints were registered against him, aimed at tying his hands. There were attempts to threaten him at the behest of the Chief Minister by his supporters," he alleged.

Citing recent statements by Minister HC Mahadevappa that some leaders in Congress were waiting for Siddaramaiah to resign, and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge reportedly giving some indications, Vijayendra said, according to his information, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and Home Minister G Parameshwara on Monday discussed the need for Siddaramaiah to resign immediately as it was not possible to defend him anymore, and embarrassment is being caused to the party.

—PTI

BJP State President BY Vijayendra addresses a press conference with BJP leaders in Bengaluru office on Tuesday
PHOTO: PTI

ED case against CM vendetta: Congress

Cong says BJP is trying to destabilise govt

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

Accusing BJP of indulging in "politics of vendetta", Congress on Tuesday said Enforcement Directorate booking Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in a money laundering case linked to MUDA land allotment case was an "attack" on the people of the State and an attempt to destabilise an elected government.

Dubbing ED as "election department" of BJP, Opposition also alleged that from 2016 to 2022, BJP toppled about 10 governments and it wants "one nation, one election, one party".

Addressing a press conference here along with party spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi, Congress General Secretary (In-charge, Communications) Jairam Ramesh said: "This attack is taking place because Karnataka people did not give the mandate to BJP. We did not get MLAs, so we have brought PMLA (is the BJP's refrain)."

Singhvi said it is clear that ED is now trying its utmost to go below the belt to "browbeat, bulldoze and bully" an elected Congress government and an elected CM. "ED is nothing but the election department of BJP. You can also call it the election demolition branch of BJP," Singhvi said.

Home Minister G Parameshwara on Tuesday said Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi BM did not return the 14 allotted sites to Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) not out of fear but because her husband was politically targeted.

The Home Minister said: "The decision to return the plots might have been delayed. However, sometimes though it is late, correct decisions are made," he said. "All 136 MLAs of the Congress party are standing firmly with Siddaramaiah. Congress will stand with him in any eventuality. This has been clarified by the high command as well as by us. The AICC President has also stated this," he said.

Law Minister HK Patil said: "It is shocking and surprising that how MUDA issue can be money laundering. It will be one of the greatest blunders that ED will be making if they are going on that path."

AICC General Secretary KC Venugopal said: "Every Indian recognises that ED/CBI actions signify intimidation and political harassment. The case against Siddaramaiah is fabricated, intended to oust him. In a federal democracy, such overtly unconstitutional acts will not be tolerated."

—Salar News with Agencies

Home Minister G Parameshwara said Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi BM returned the plots because her husband was targeted
PHOTO: PTI

BJP questions land given to Kharge's trust

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

Amid a row over MUDA site allocation case in State, BJP on Tuesday raised the allocation of a parcel of land to a trust run by AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge's family in Bengaluru, alleging that Congress leaders' families are engaged in "land grab".

BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad alleged that the Congress government in State has allocated 5 acres to Siddhartha Vihar Trust, run by Kharge's family, under "suspicious circumstances" and demanded a "transparent and honest" reply from the Congress President to the questions raised on the issue. "It's surprising that the Siddaramaiah government allocated the 5-acre land to the trust in a high-tech defence area in Bangalore for setting up an R&D facility," he said. "This 5-acre land was given (to the Kharge family-run trust) within a few days of framing of the rules for (setting up of) R&D facilities in the area," the former Union minister added.

Prasad said this matter has reached Lokayukta in Karnataka and it is also pending with the court. "Court will do its work. But when there are so many suspicious circumstances surrounding this entire fast-track allotment, Kharge ji will have to reply. He is Congress President and also leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha," he said. Prasad said BJP does not have any problem if a land is allocated to a "genuine trust for genuine purpose in an authentic manner". "But the way the political leaders' families are engaging in land grab movement in the garb of trust, it is wrong," he said. *—PTI*

BJP alleges Congress allocated 5 acres to Siddhartha Vihar Trust, run by Mallikarjun Kharge's family
PHOTO: PTI

FREE VEHICLE DISTRUBITON

To commemorate I'ntl Senior Citizens Day, Department of Physically Challenged and Senior Citizen Empowerment in Bengaluru distributes vehicles to differently-abled individuals on Tuesday
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

BJP's Puttur to fight DK Council poll

BENGALURU, 1 OCT

BJP on Tuesday announced the candidature of Kishore Kumar Puttur for byelection to the Karnataka Legislative Council from Dakshina Kannada Local Authorities' Constituency.

The bypoll, necessitated following the election of former minister and senior BJP leader Kota Srinivasa Poojary to Lok Sabha, will be held on 21 October.

The ruling Congress is yet to announce its nominee.

Congratulating Puttur, state BJP President BY Vijayendra said: "BJP always emphasised on social justice. In this regard, by selecting Kishore Kumar Puttur, who belongs to the most backward community, as a candidate, the party leaders have shown commitment to social justice and political representation for the underprivileged communities,"

The last date for filing nominations is 3 October, and scrutiny will take place on 4 October.

Seventh October will be the last date for withdrawal of nominations. Votes will be counted on 24 October. *—PTI*

Topple govt jibe: Yatnal booked

BENGALURU, 1 OCT

A case has been registered by police against BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal for his alleged statement that a great leader of has set aside Rs 1,000 crore to topple the Congress government in State.

Based on a complaint by Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee General Secretary S Manohar, High Grounds police registered a case under section 192 of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, which is related to the maliciously or wantonly provoking others with the intent to incite a riot. Yatnal had on Sunday claimed in Davangere that a "great leader" of his party set aside a huge amount of money to topple the Congress government and become Chief Minister. He, however, did not reveal the name of the "great leader". *—Salar News*

BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal
PHOTO: PTI

- A case has been registered by police against BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal for saying a great leader of has set aside Rs 1,000 crore to topple the government.

HAL send 1st AL-31FP engine to IAF

BENGALURU, 1 OCT

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) handed over the first AL-31FP Aero Engine, manufactured under the 240-engine contract, to the Indian Air Force at Koraput in Odisha.

The contract for 240 AL-31FP Aero Engines for Su-30MKI aircraft was signed on 9 September, Bengaluru-headquartered HAL noted said on Tuesday, adding, these engines would be delivered in eight years.

The statement said Secretary (Defence Production) Sanjeev Kumar lauded HAL's efforts in delivering the first engine within weeks of signing the contract.

"This key milestone reflects HAL's aero engine manufacturing competency and dedication to support the Su-30MKI fleet of IAF. It is very heartening to see that Koraput Division has mastered cutting edge technologies of aero engine manufacturing and has set up required infrastructure to match with the global OEMs," he said.

HAL CMD D K Sunil said: "During this entire engine manufacturing process, we aim to engage Indian industries from present level of work share from 40 per cent to more than 50 per cent in next two-three years and help in employment generation." Sukhoi Engine Division, Koraput, was created by HAL for manufacture of engines of Su-30MKI aircraft from raw material stage to final engine, it was noted.

—Salar News

PHOTO: @HALHQBLR/X

Arrested 4 Pak nationals to be deported soon: Official

BENGALURU, 1 OCT

Central intelligence agencies probing the arrest of four Pakistani nationals who were residing in Bengaluru under different identities are working on formalities to deport them back to Pakistan.

"The four Pakistan nationals will be moved to New Delhi to complete the deportation formalities after which they would be sent back to their home country. Preliminary investigations have revealed that they had fled their country to avoid religious persecution. We are also looking at whether there were others in the country who had fled Pakistan and are living in other parts of the country," intelligence officials said. The four Pakistani nationals who were arrested on Sunday are Rashid Ali Siddiqui, 48; his wife Ayesha, 38; and her parents Hanif Mohammed, 73; and Rubina, 61, who lived in Rajapura village in Anekal taluk.

The four Pakistan nationals lived under the Hindu names Shankar Sharma, Asha Rani, Ram Babu Sharma and Rani Sharma. They lived under the Hindu names Shankar Sharma, Asha Rani, Ram Babu Sharma and Rani Sharma. According to Home Minister G Parameshwara, the foreign nationals had been residing in the country for the past 10 years and had come to Bengaluru a year ago.

The State Home Minister further questioned the intelligence agency for not getting any information about them. *—Salar News*

GANDHI JAYANTHI

BBMP to hold cleanliness campaign today

BENGALURU, 1 OCT

To commemorate the 155th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) urged denizens to take a pledge to make City clean and green.

The citizens can take 'Swachatha Andholan Pledge' by attending live streaming on BBMP's official YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/live/hGhl_6fj8v4) at 9am on Wednesday. The pledge can also be taken on the official website of BBMP (https://cleanblr.bbmp.gov.in/pledge.php), where over 72,000 people have already taken the pledge.

Besides, BBMP will organise 'Swachatha Shramdhara', a cleanliness campaign in all eight zones of the corporation under the leadership of the zonal commissioners.

BBMP will conduct a 1km 'Gandhi Walk' that starts at 9am from Gandhi Bhavan near Sivananda Circle and passes through Race Course Circle, Basaveshwara Circle, Valmiki Circle, and concludes at West Gate of Vidhana Soudha.

This will be followed by an event at Banquet Hall, which will be presided over by Chief Minister Siddaramiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar. Everyone who takes the pledge will receive a digital letter of appreciation from Shivakumar. *—Salar News*

Artist Mohammad Mahar Ahmed creates a Swachh Bharat logo using discarded plastic waste on the eve of Gandhi Jayanthi in Bengaluru
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

PHOTO: PTI

India will train military: Modi to Jamaica PM

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

India and Jamaica on Tuesday inked four pacts including one on possible roll-out of Indian UPI payment systems in the island nation as Prime Minister Narendra Modi held wide-ranging talks with his Jamaican counterpart Andrew Holness focusing on boosting ties in sectors like defence and energy.

In his media statement, Modi said India has always been a reliable partner in Jamaica's development journey and it is ready to share its expertise with that country in areas such as digital public infrastructure, small industries, biofuel, innovation, health, education and agriculture. He said India will move forward in training and capacity building of the Jamaican military.

Modi said he and Holness also discussed regional and global issues. *—PTI*

Court summons Rahul over remarks on Savarkar

MUMBAI, 1 OCT

A court in Maharashtra's Nashik district has summoned Congress MP Rahul Gandhi in a defamation case filed against him for his alleged objectionable remarks against Hindutva ideologue Vinayak Damodar Sa-varkar. Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate, Nashik, Deepali Parimal Kaduskar, issued a process (sum-mons/ notice) to Gandhi on 27 September, noting that the "statement made against a patriotic person prima-facie seems to be defamatory." Gandhi will have to appear either personally or through his legal representative on the next date of the case, which is yet to be decided. The complainant, who is the di-rector of an NGO, claimed that Gandhi, on the two occasions, by his words and visual representations knowingly harmed the reputation of Veer Savarkar.*—PTI*

Pune OBC activist manhandled by Maratha protesters

PUNE, 1 OCT

OBC activist Laxman Hake was allegedly manhandled and verbally abused by members of the Maratha community in Pune, and a video of the incident surfaced on social media, police said on Tuesday. A case has been registered against 25 people for the attack that occurred near Kondhwa on Monday night, an official said. A video that surfaced on social media showed people from the Maratha community pro-testing against Hake, claiming that he was drunk and had verbally abused some of them. Police said protesters brought Hake to the police station and demanded that he undergo a medical test, alleging that he was in an inebriated state.*—PTI*

Can give up ministerial post for principles: Chirag

PATNA, 1 OCT

Union Minister Chirag Paswan has caused a flutter by stating he would choose to give up his ministerial berth instead of a compromise on his principles, in keeping with the precedent set by his late father Ram Vilas Paswan. The chief of Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), made the remark at a function of the party's SC/ST cell here on Monday. "My father was a minister in the UPA government too. And too many things took place back then which were detrimental to the interests of Dalits. So we parted ways," he said. Sources in both rival coalitions also felt that raking up the resignation of his father was more of an embarrassment to BJP than Congress since it was during the Vajpayee government that Paswan senior gave up his cabinet berth in protest against the 2002 riots of Gujarat. PTI. *—PTI*

Cong wants to end patriotism: Modi

He says Cong wants to divide on caste lines

PALWAL, 1 OCT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday launched a scathing attack on Congress for promoting caste politics, accusing the party of "crushing patriotism" by dividing the country along caste and religious lines.

Making a strong appeal to people to vote back the ruling BJP to power in Haryana in the 5 October polls, Modi said Congress's politics is limited to false promises whereas the BJP's politics is to put in hard work and is result-oriented.

Fast development of Haryana is Modi's guarantee, he said.

In his last poll rally in Palwal after having earlier addressed gatherings at Kurukshetra, Gohana and Hisar and interacting with BJP workers through NaMo app last month for the Haryana polls, he said enthusiasm among the people showed a sense of the result of elections.

PM Narendra Modi addresses a rally ahead of Haryana polls, in Palwa, on Tuesday PHOTO: PTI

"This is my final public meeting for this polls," Modi told the Palwal gathering in presence of Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini and other BJP leaders.

"In village after village, there is a BJP wave. Everywhere, one voice is heard --"Bharosa dil se, BJP phir se," he said.

Attacking Congress, Modi said its politics remains limited to false promises, whereas the BJP's politics is to put in hard work and is result-oriented. Those who looted rights of poor, gave slogan of 'Garibi hatao', he said, adding Congress kept every issue important for the country entangled. "Woh uljane mein expert rahe hai." "Congress did not let Ram temple to be built in Ayodhya, they did allow R Ambedkar's Constitution to be fully implemented in Jammu & Kashmir, they kept our sisters deprived of reservation in Parliament and Vidhan Sabha, they kept Muslim sisters entangled in triple talaq," he said. *—PTI*

ASSEMBLY POLLS '24 HARYANA

Modi works for few billionaires: Rahul

RaGa says BJP ignores farmers' welfare

SONIPAT, 1 OCT

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday accused Narendra Modi government of attacking the Constitution and also slammed it over various issues including unemployment, the Agniveer scheme and farmers' welfare.

Addressing a public meeting in Sonipat while campaigning for the October 5 Haryana Assembly polls, he also alleged that the government was working for a handful of billionaires in the country. "While en route to this place, a man stopped me. He told me he runs a small business. He said Modi and the Haryana government destroyed him," the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha said as he blamed demonetisation and "wrong" GST. "He (the man) told me they did this to help Adani and Ambani," claimed Gandhi. "Everyone knows that the central and Haryana governments are being run to help two-three 'arabpatis'. Whatever avenues of employment you had, they have been shut," he alleged.

Congress leaders Bajrang Punia and Rahul Gandhi a public meeting ahead of Haryana elections, in Sonipat, on Tuesday PHOTO: PTI

Attacking the BJP over the issue of the Agnipath scheme, he alleged the military recruitment programme was a way to "steal" a soldier's pension, canteen facilities and martyr status. *—PTI*

CONG, BJP TRADE BARBS

Atishi stopped from meeting Sonam

Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk was detained during his 'Delhi Chalo Padyatra' near Delhi on Monday night PHOTO: PTI

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

Delhi Chief Minister Atishi was stopped outside the Bawana Police Station on Tuesday while she was heading to meet climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, who was detained last night trying to enter the na-tional capital with his supporters.

After being denied permission to meet Wangchuk, Atishi slammed BJP and Lt Governor, alleging that this is dictatorship.

"I reached Bawana Police Station to meet Sonam Wangchuk ji and 150 brothers and sisters of Ladakh. Delhi police did not let me meet them. We were told that LG sahab called and ordered not to let me meet them. This dictatorship is not right," Atishi alleged in a post on X.

AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal also objected to Wangchuk's detention and said, "Delhi is not any single person's inheritance; everyone has the right to come here."Asked about Congress' reaction, senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar said, "I don't know the facts. I will have to check the facts." "If Rahul has a comment to make, why (does) he maintain a conspicuous silence when cartoon-ists are lifted in Kolkata and a satirist is jailed in Tamil Nadu," Shankar asked, adding that the Congress leader's reaction to Wangchuk's detention was "hypocrisy in extreme".

> **Even the very fundamental right to protest has been snatched from us for raising our voice against the onslaught on our identity & resources. We stand in solidarity with the people of Ladakh**
>
> —Mehbooba Mufti, PDP Chief

PIL in HC against detention of Wangchuk

A public interest litigation was filed in Delhi High Court and the court agreed to list the matter for hearing on 3 October, if it is in order by 3.30pm.

The matter was mentioned for listing before a bench of Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela by the counsel for the petitioner. *—PTI*

Vijayan in soup over smuggling remark

T'PURAM, 1 OCT

Under attack from the Opposition over some of his purported remarks in an interview given to a media outlet, the office of Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan clarified on Tuesday he had not mentioned any particular place or region, nor used the terms 'anti-state' or 'anti-national activities' during the inter-ac-tion.

In a letter sent to the media house, the CMO said a clarification that accurately presents the chief minister's actual views would be crucial in restoring public understanding and preventing further misin-terpre-tation.

The Opposition Congress intensified its attack against Pinarayi Vijayan over his recent statements on gold smuggling through an international airport in Malappuram district and alleged that his remarks were to please the Sangh Parivar leaders in New Delhi. Leader of Opposition, VD Satheesan, lashed out at CM Vijayan, alleging that his statements to a national media outlet in New Delhi contradicted his previous claims made in the Assembly and elsewhere.

Pinarayi Vijayan PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

"His remarks that the money reached Malappuram through gold smuggling is used for anti-national ac-tivities is meant to please the Sangh Parivar leaders in New Delhi," he said. If the CM's statements are said to be true, then it is a serious issue, Satheesan said, and asked why the government had hidden this till now.

Meanwhile, Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan asked what action has been taken by Vijayan, who holds the "reins of power", against the groups smuggling gold into the state and using money from it for "anti-national activities". *—PTI*

Kerala Governor's shawl catches fire at event

Palakkad, 1 Oct

A shawl worn by Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan on Tuesday caught fire while lighting a lamp at an event here, but it was quickly extinguished, official sources said. Sources said that as the Governor bent to light a lamp at the event, the end of his shawl caught fire. "It was quickly extinguished on the spot. No one was injured," sources said. *—PTI*

Cong, Jamaat backing dissident MLA Anvar: CPI(M)

T'PURAM/MALAPPURAM, 1 OCT

The ruling CPI (M) on Tuesday alleged that an alliance of Congress, IUML, SDPI and Jamaat-e-Islami was backing independent MLA P V Anvar, who has been locking horns with the Left party and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan for the past few weeks on various issues.

Continuing its attack on the MLA from Nilambur assembly constituency with whom it has severed all ties, CPI(M) said Anvar's public meeting on Sunday was largely attended by Congress, its ally Indian Union Muslim League, the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) and the Jamaat. The Left party's state secretary, MV Govindan, said that only a small portion of the attendees were from CPI(M). *—PTI*

48-HOUR BANDH HITS NORMAL LIFE IN MANIPUR DICT

IMPHAL, 1 OCT

A 48-hour bandh called by a Joint Action Committee over the failure to secure the release of two youths abducted by militants affected normal life in Manipur's Thoubal district on Tuesday, police said.

The bandh, which began at 3 am, was called by the JAC formed over the abduction of two local youths by militants on Friday. The JAC had threatened of democratic protests and a total shutdown in the district if the youths were not released by Monday night.

Thousands of people took to the streets and blocked National Highway 102, which connects Imphal with Moreh, at various places including Mela Ground, Wangjing, Yairipok and Khangabok, police said. Women protesters at Thoubal sat on the highway while youths burnt old tyres to prevent vehicular movement. *—PTI*

1L cases of love jihad; 14 LS seats witnessed vote jihad: Fadnavis

MUMBAI, 1 OCT

More than one lakh complaints have highlighted a deliberate "love jihad" conspiracy wherein Hindu women were being lured into marriage by men using fake identities, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said. Targeting opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi, Fadnavis claimed "vote jihad" was witnessed in 14 of 48 con-stituencies in Maharashtra in recent Lok Sabha elections.

Addressing a public event in Kolhapur city on Monday evening, Fadnavis pointed out instances wherein women were tricked into inter-faith marriage and subsequently abandoned after they gave birth to children.

Fadnavis' remarks drew sharp reactions from Congress which accused him of violating the Constitutional oath and demanded an apology. Love 'Jihad' is an unofficial term used by Hindu groups to refer to an alleged campaign by Muslim men to convert Hindu girls under the pretext of love and marriage. "Vote jihad was seen in Lok Sabha elections. In the Dhule, BJP candidate led with 1.90 lakh votes in five seats. However, our candidate trailed by 1.94 lakh votes because of voting in the Malegaon Central, losing the election by just 4,000 votes," Fadnavis said. *—PTI*

Devendra Fadnavis PHOTO: PTI

ASSEMBLY POLLS '24 MAHARASTRA

Athawale seeks 10 seats from BJP in M'rashta

Union Minister Ramdas Athawale on Tuesday said he has conveyed to senior BJP leader that his party RPI (A) wants to contest on eight to 10 seats in the upcoming Maharashtra Assembly polls. RPI (A) is part of the Mahayuti alliance, comprising the BJP, Shiv Sena led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar's NCP. He said the seat-sharing talks are underway, and he spoke to BJP's Maharashtra polls in-charge Bhupendra Yadav, about it.

DEMANDS NOT MEET

Bengal junior doctors resume 'total cease work'

KOLKATA, 1 OCT

Agitating junior doctors in West Bengal resumed their indefinite 'total cease work' on Tuesday to press for various demands, including ensuring their safety and security at all medical establishments.

The junior doctors had on September 21 rejoined their duties partially at government hospitals after a 42-day protest. They were on a 'cease work' agitation to protest the rape and murder of an on-duty woman doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital on August 9.

"We do not see any positive approach from the state government to fulfil our demands for safety and security. Today is the 52nd day of the protest (since 9 August) and we are still being attacked and there is no attempt to keep the other promises made during the meetings with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. In the given situation, we are left with no option other than opting for full cease work, starting today," Aniket Mahato, one of the agitating junior doctors, told PTI.

The junior medics have also called for a march from College Square to Dharmatala in central Kolkata on Wednesday, and invited people from all walks of life to join them. The junior doctors said that justice for the deceased woman medic continued to be on top of their de-mand and it should be answered immediately without any further delay in the form of a protracted judi-cial process. *—PTI*

People take part in a rally against the rape of a trainee doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, in Kolkata on Tuesday PHOTO: PTI

> **People of the state wait for Durga Pooja festivities throughout the year. Durga Puja in Bengal marks the beginning of the festive season. After that, there will be Diwali, Kali puja, and Chhath pooja. This festive season continues till the Christmas in December**
>
> —Mamata Banerjee, Chief Minsiter

Guv asks Didi to give account of central funds

West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose wrote to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee asking her government to file a report to him detailing how Rs 1.17 lakh crore of Central funds allotted to the State in the 2023-24 fiscal under various schemes were utilised, a well-placed source in the Raj Bhavan said.

INDIA INITIATES DUMPING PROBE AGAINST CHINA

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

India has initiated a probe into alleged dumping of as many as six products, including certain chemicals, and cold rolled electrical steel and black toner powder cartridge, imported from China following separate complaints from domestic players.

The commerce ministry's investigation arm Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) is probing the dumping of 1,1,1,2-Tetrafluoroethane or R-134a; Acrylonitrile Butadiene Rubber; certain Antioxidants; polytetrafluoroethylene; black toner powder cartridge; and colled rolled non-oriented electrical steel from China.

According to six separate notifications, the applicants have alleged that material injury is being caused to the domestic industry. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

150 cops search Sadhguru's Isha for 2 missing women

CHENNAI, 1 OCT

Over 150 cops from Coimbatore launched a search operation at Isha Foundation's ashram in Thondamuthur on Tuesday, a day after the Madras High Court sought a report on all criminal cases registered against the foundation. The Madras High Court pulled up spiritual leader Sadhguru asked him why he was encouraging young women to live like hermits. The court had ordered the police to conduct an enquiry and file a report while hearing a habeas corpus petition filed by S Kamaraj, a professor, claiming that his two daughters, Geetha Kamaraj, 42, and Latha Kamaraj, 39, were being held captive at the foundation in Coimbatore. He alleged that the organisation was brainwashing individuals, converting them into monks. *—Agencies*

UP HM hangs self in school, alleges work harassment

UDAIPUR, 1 OCT

A government school headmaster's body was found hanging within the institution's building here on Tuesday, with the Amroha district administration ordering a probe into the suspected suicide case. Sanjeev Kumar, 50, worked at the composite school in Sultanpur area under Gajraula Police Station limits of the district. He has alleged harassment by two colleagues and the district's basic education officer, officials said. District Magistrate Nidhi Gupta said the headmaster's body was found hanging in the school. Asked about those named in the suicide note as accused, she said, "The names that appeared include two teachers Raghvendra Singh and Sarita Singh; and Basic Shiksha Adhikari Monika . *—PTI*

Building caretaker shot dead over loud music in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

A 36-year-old caretaker of a building was shot dead after he intervened between two tenants who had fight over loud music in Dwarka's Mohan Nagar area, police on Tuesday said. The victim, Bablu, had received a gunshot wound in his stomach, they said. According to police, Pujit, a 27-year-old tenant in the same building, was playing loud music when another tenant Lavnish, a gym supplement supplier and his cousin Aman objected to it and picked a fight with him and dragged him to the terrace. When he heard the commotion, Bablu also reached the rooftop and tried to mediate between the two parties. Aman, who had a pistol, handed it over to Lavnish who fired it and hit Bablu. *—PTI*

Woman dies from vaginal bleeding as man finds remedies

NAVSARI, 1 OCT

A 23-year-old nursing graduate died due to severe blood loss after suffering vaginal tears during a sexual encounter, leading her boyfriend to search for remedies online instead of seeking immediate medical assistance. The incident occurred on September 23 at a hotel in Navsari. The police arrested the man and filed a case against him. According to a forensic report, the woman experienced extreme vaginal bleeding, prompting panic between the couple. Rather than calling for an ambulance, her 26-year-old boyfriend attempted to find solutions on the internet. He allegedly used a cloth in an attempt to stop the bleeding, after which the woman fainted. The boyfriend called a friend took her to a private hospital. She was referred to Civil Hospital, where she was declared dead upon arrival. *—Agencies*

Situation not normal with China near LAC: Army Chief

He said positive signal is seen from the talks between 2 nations

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

The situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh is stable but sensitive and not normal, Chief of Army Staff Gen Upendra Dwivedi said on Tuesday on the dragging military standoff between China and India in the region.

Though a "positive signalling" is coming out from the diplomatic talks between the two sides on resolution of the row, the execution of any plan depends on the military commanders on the ground, he said.

India and China held two rounds of diplomatic talks in July and August with an aim to find an early resolution of outstanding issues in their standoff on the LAC in eastern Ladakh.

The military standoff between the two sides began in early May of 2020. Full resolution of the border row has not yet been achieved though the two sides have disengaged from a number of friction points.

"Till the time the situation is not restored the situation will remain sensitive, and we are fully prepared to face any kind of a contingency," he said.

In the complete gamut, the "trust" has become the "biggest casualty", he added.

"With China, you have to compete, you have to cooperate, you have to coexist, you have to confront and contest," he said.

Last month, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held talks in Russian city of St Petersburg.

In the talks held on the sidelines of a BRICS summit, the two sides agreed to work with "urgency" and "redouble" efforts to achieve complete disengagement in friction points in Ladakh.

Asked about China's construction of villages along the frontier with India, he said that country is carrying out "artificial" settlements.

"No problem, it is their country," he said, adding India is also having "model villages" near borders.

The ties between the two countries nosedived following the fierce clash in the Galwan Valley in June 2020 that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades.

India has said ties with China cannot be normal unless there is peace in the border areas.

The two sides have so far held 21 rounds of talks to resolve the standoff.

India has been pressing the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to disengage from Depsang and Demchok. *—PTI*

> **Till the time the situation is not restored the situation will remain sensitive, and we are fully prepared to face any kind of a contingency. With China, you have to compete, you have to cooperate, you have to coexist, you have to confront and contest**
>
> -Upendra Dwivedi, Chief of Army Staff Gen

EYES RS 5K CR REVENUE

Andhra's new law allows pvt retailers to sell alcohol

VIJAYAWADA, 1 OCT

The Andhra Pradesh government has notified a new liquor policy, allowing private retailers to sell spirits on the lines of Haryana and others with the state expecting to rake in Rs 5,500 crore revenue.

In a complete overhaul of excise policy based on best practices from other states, Andhra Pradesh has decided retail sales of liquor through 3,736 notified private shops across the state.

The new policy will take effect from 12 October, 2024, as per the notification dated September 30, 2024.

The permission to sell IMFL (Indian-made foreign liquor) and and FL (foreign liquor) will be granted to private persons or entities through a selection process, the notification said. The period of licence for selling IMFL and FL by shops shall be from October 12, 2024 to September 30, 2026, it added.

PHOTO: PTI

Out of the total number of shops to be licensed in 2024-26, as many as 3,396 will be in the open category, while 340 shops will be reserved for allocation to 'Geetha Kulalu' (a toddy tapping community) with a view to empower them and promote equity and social justice. The selection process for granting licence will be through a draw of lots and an applicant can apply for more than one shop. There shall be no restriction on the number of shop licences a person can hold. *—PTI*

TICKETS SOLD IN BLACK

No ties with BookMyShow: Viagogo amid Coldplay row

MUMBAI, 1 OCT

Viagogo, one of the platforms where Coldplay concert tickets are being re-sold in black at prices quoting several times the original —denied any association with BookMyShow.

Viagogo said that it is simply a marketplace where individuals can come and resell their tickets.

This comes as the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Mumbai police has summoned top officials of Big Tree Entertainment Private Limited, the parent of BookMyShow amid the black ticketing allegations surrounding tickets of Coldplay concert.

According to Indian Express, Viagogo spokesperson said that their "platform is fully compliant with Indian law as it is in all markets in which it operates.

Meanwhile, Mumbai police recorded the statement of the Chief Operating Officer of BookMyShow.

Anil Makhija, COO of the company, appeared before officials of the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) on Monday to record his statement, the official said.

The EOW had on Saturday summoned BookMyShow's CEO Ashish Hemrajani in a complaint by an advocate accusing the ticketing platform. However, he failed to appear before the police, he said.

The highly-anticipated Coldplay concert in Mumbai in January 2025 has been clouded by concerns about ticketing scams on BookMyShow, as millions of fans scrambled for a limited number of tickets. *—Agencies*

PHOTO: PTI

WB does a U-turn, says not stopping trams immediately

KOLKATA, 1 OCT

Although trams have become a "white elephant" for the West Bengal government, immediate suspension of services is not on the cards as projected in a section of the media, a senior transport official said.

Protests have erupted in Kolkata after Transport Minister Snehasis Chakraborty last week announced that the state government was in favour of discontinuing the 151-year-old tram services from most roads of the city, barring a 2km stretch from Maidan to Esplanade, due to traffic snarls caused by the "slow-moving vehicles".

He, however, added that the matter is sub judice before the Calcutta High Court and the state would make its submission on why it wants the services withdrawn during the course of hearing.

"Only 27 tram cars are plying along 12km at present, down from around 100 tram cars plying along 61 km in 2011. The dwindling numbers are due to the fact that once a tram car breaks down, there is no way we can repair it," he said.

He said from 70,000 in 2011, the number of people commuting in trams daily has come down to 5,000-7,000 at present.

Trams were introduced from Sealdah to Armenian Ghat via Dalhousie Square in Kolkata on 24 February, 1873 as horse drawn carriages.

From the early 20th century, trams became a part of the city's landscape and a popular mode of transportation for middle and lower-middle class residents. The iconic symbol of the city has been featured in Indian cinema since the 1950s.

Trams were so important for the city residents that one paisa hike in its fare in 1953 led to protests spearheaded by communists against the then Congress government in West Bengal. *—PTI*

Trams were introduced from Sealdah to Armenian Ghat via Dalhousie Square in Kolkata in 1873 PHOTO: PTI

Rajinikanth PHOTO: PTI

ACTOR RAJINIKANTH HOSPITALISED AMID HEALTH SCARE

CHENNAI, 1 OCT

Superstar Rajinikanth on Tuesday underwent a non-surgical procedure for an issue in the main blood vessel of his heart and a stent was placed to seal off a swelling, the hospital treating him said, amid an outpouring of prayers and wishes for his speedy recovery.

He was stable, doing well and should be home in two days, a medical bulletin from Apollo Hospitals said.

The 73 year-old Rajinikanth was admitted to the Apollo Hospitals, here, on September 30. He had a swelling in the main blood vessel leaving his heart (Aorta), which was treated by a non-surgical, transcatheter method, the hospital said in a medical bulletin. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin wished the superstar a speedy recovery, and scores of the top actor's fans sent their prayers on social media and wishes, too, for his quick recovery.

The actor's upcoming flick, 'Vettaiyan,' will hit the screens on 10 October. The cast includes Amitabh Bachchan, Fahad Fazil, Manju Warrier, Rana Daggubati and is directed by Jai Bhim-fame TJ Gnanavel. *—PTI*

No pre-arrest bail for school trustees in Badlapur rape

MUMBAI, 1 OCT

Bombay High Court on Tuesday refused pre-arrest bail to two accused school trustees in the Badlapur sexual assault case, and also came down heavily on police for failing to arrest them so far.

A division bench of the high court gave an earful to the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the case for its inability to apprehend the duo, asking whether it was waiting for the accused to obtain pre-arrest bail.

A division bench of Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Prithviraj Chavan questioned as to how the police, that usually go to any extent to nab an accused, are unable to arrest them in this case.

The court in August took suo motu (on its own) cognisance of the case.

Two girls - aged four and five - were sexually assaulted inside the washroom of a school in Badlapur town of Thane district by a male attendant. The accused, Akshay Shinde, was subsequently arrested. He was killed by police in a shoot-out on 23 September. The Maharashtra government in August said an SIT, headed by an Inspector General of Police-rank officer, will probe the alleged sexual abuse of two girl students of the school in Badlapur. Two trustees of the school - the chairman and secretary- were also named as accused in the case. The duo has been booked under POCSO) Act for not reporting the incident to the police immediately and negligence. *—PTI*

Bombay HC PHOTO: PTI

AUCTION FOR 'SARPANCH' DRAWS ₹2 CR BID

CHANDIGARH, 1 OCT

An "auction" for the post of Sarpanch in a Gurdaspur village saw one of the bidders offering Rs 2 crore for the position.

The auction, a violation of democratic norms, has been condemned by several political leaders.

Bidding for the auction that was held in Hardowal Kalan village started at Rs 50 lakh, and shot up to Rs 2 crore, offered by local BJP leader Atma Singh.

The politician, who made the bid through a cheque, said villagers had decided to elect a Sarpanch who will offer maximum funds for the village. The auction money will be spent on the development of the village, he said. The allocation of the funds will be decided by a committee composed of the villagers, said Atma Singh. *—PTI*

CJI flays mentioning of same case by lawyers

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud on Tuesday deprecated the practice of mentioning a case for urgent hearing by different lawyers, saying that he will not allow this as it put his "personal credibility" at stake.

At times, lawyers, in their bid to get their cases listed for urgent hearings, take chances and get the same cases mentioned again and again on different dates by changing advocates. "Stop this practice of repeated mentioning by different counsels.

All of you are just trying to take a chance. Whatever little discretion I have as the Chief Justice will never be exercised in your favour, because there is an attempt to take this court for a ride. "Get three different counsels and see... the judge blinks and you get an order.

This is what is happening in this court. I will not do it. Because my personal credibility is at stake...," the CJI said. The observations were made at the outset of the day's proceedings when a lawyer mentioned a case related to lapse of mining lease for urgent listing. *—PTI*

DY Chandrachud PHOTO: PTI

Govinda PHOTO: PTI

GOVINDA SHOOTS SELF IN THE LEG AS GUN MISFIRES

MUMBAI, 1 OCT

Actor Govinda was injured in the leg on Tuesday after his revolver accidentally went off at his Mumbai residence when he was about to leave for the airport, police said.

The 60-year-old actor is out of danger and recuperating at a private hospital, a Mumbai police official said.

Govinda, a favourite with audiences for his impeccable comic timing and dancing skills, later issued a statement informing his fans he is doing better.

The accident happened around 4.45 am when he was about to leave home to catch a 6 am flight to Kolkata for a show, according to his manager Shashi Sinha. The trigger of the licensed revolver got pushed accidentally while the actor was keeping it in the cupboard. A bullet then hit his leg, police said.

Earlier in the day, a police official said Govinda had been discharged and was recuperating at home. *—PTI*

IN VARANASI

Sanatan grp removes Sai Baba statues from temples

VARANASI, 1 OCT

Statues of Sai Baba were removed from multiple temples in Varanasi on Tuesday following a campaign launched by a group called 'Sanatan Rakshak Dal'.

Of these, the group removed a Sai Baba statue from the Bada Ganesha Temple here and placed it outside the temple's premises.

Rammu Guru, the head priest of the temple, said, "Sai Baba was being worshiped without proper knowledge, which is forbidden according to scriptures."

Similarly, Shankar Puri, the head priest of the Annapurna Temple, said, "There is no mention of the worship of Sai Baba in the scriptures."

Ajay Sharma, state president of the Sanatan Rakshak Dal, said, "Only the worship of Lord Shiva, the supreme deity, should take place in Kashi (Varanasi)."

The priest of the Sai Temple located in Sant Raghuvar Das Nagar in the city's Sigra area, Samar Ghosh, said, "Those who claim to be Sanatanis today are the same people who established Sai Baba in the temples, and now they are the ones who have removed him from there. All gods are one. God can be seen in any form. Such acts are not right. They will hurt people's faith and spread discord in society."

Ghosh mentioned that this Sai Temple opens daily from 7am to 10pm, and Sai devotees come to worship every day.

"Particularly on Thursdays, around 4,000 to 5,000 devotees visit the temple to pay their respects," he said.

Vivek Srivastava, a Sai Baba devotee, said the removal of Sai Baba's statue is an extremely distressing event.

Sai Baba, revered as a spiritual leader, is known for his teachings of love, forgiveness, and charity, transcending religious boundaries.

On its website, the Shree Saibaba Sansthan Trust, Shirdi, states that Sai Baba is revered as one of the greatest saints ever seen in India, endowed with unprecedented powers, and is worshipped as a God incarnate. (SAI meaning Sakshaat Ishwar) (God the absolute). *—PTI*

Sai Baba idols were removed from temples in Kashi and allegely immersed in Ganga River PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

WEST BENGAL UNDER WATER

Women walk through a flooded area, in Uttar Dinajpur district of West Bengal, on Tuesday. The current flood in the state was triggered by the release of excessive water from DVC barrages in a short period after heavy rain in the neighbouring states ***PHOTO: PTI***

Will ammo for Ukraine strain Indo-Russia ties?

Visiting Moscow in early July, Prime Minister Narendra Modi described Russia as New Delhi's "trusted ally" and "all-weather friend", referring to the decades-old strategic collaboration between the two nations.

Yet, less than three months later, that relationship is being tested, especially after reports that Kyiv has accessed Indian ammunition and is using it in the Russia-Ukraine war. An investigation by the Reuters news agency suggests that Indian shells, bought by Italy and the Czech Republic, have been routed to Ukraine. The report follows a series of battlefront images that have emerged in recent months showing Indian ammunition being used by Ukrainian forces to push back against Russia.

Meanwhile, Modi has held a string of meetings with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, beginning in June in Tokyo, then in a first-ever visit by an Indian PM to Kyiv in August, and finally, last week, in New York on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly.

India's Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal described news reports of Ukraine using Indian ammunition as "speculative and mischievous". He denied that India had violated any rules but did not specifically deny the presence of Indian shells in Ukraine's armoury.

But Russian officials are unconvinced by India's response, and pose a central question: Has New Delhi pressured buyers of its shells to make sure it does not reach the war in Ukraine?

If Indian ammunition is making its way to Ukraine, it would not be the only instance of Indian weapons being used in current wars. In June, Al Jazeera revealed how rockets and explosives manufactured by Indian companies were being shipped to Israel amid the devastating war on Gaza, in which more than 41,000 people have been killed.

PM Narendra Modi with Russia President Vladimir Putin ***PHOTO: PTI***

And if the shells are reaching Ukraine through third countries — without India necessarily intending for that to happen — that too would not be unprecedented, said Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu, professor at the Center for Global Affairs at New York University.

'Equal opportunity supplier'

Traditionally a leading arms importer, India exported $3bn worth of weapons from 2018 to 2023 as it has tried to develop its homegrown defence manufacturing industry under Modi.

The Ukraine war has provided the Indian defence industry a major boost. Exports by just three companies — Munitions India, Yantra and Kalyani Strategic Systems — to Italy and the Czech Republic jumped from $2.8m to $135.24m between 2022 and 2024.

Impact on ties with Russia

Some experts believe that Ukraine's use of Indian ammunition will not meaningfully complicate New Delhi's long and strong relationship with Moscow, rooted in their close cooperation during the Cold War. Two-thirds of India's weapons purchases in the past two decades were from Russia – this at a time when New Delhi has tried to wean itself off its military dependence on Moscow. Estimates suggest that Indian shells make up barely 1 percent of Ukraine's ammunition needs in the war against Russia.

But the Russian official who spoke to Al Jazeera suggested that Moscow is reading the tea leaves a little differently. The official pointed out that soon after returning from Kyiv in August, Modi called United States President Joe Biden to update him on his talks with Zelenskyy. But he made no such call to Putin, who instead made the move to call Modi.

Modi then sent India's National Security Adviser Ajit Doval to Moscow to brief Putin about the Indian PM's meeting with Zelenskyy. The Kremlin leaked footage of Doval trying to persuade a seemingly unconvinced Putin about the merits of Modi's visit to Kyiv, further indicating the unease in ties between India and Russia.

Meanwhile, back home, leaders of the opposition Congress party are accusing Modi of sabotaging historically good relations with Moscow under US pressure. "The Indian PM was forced to travel by bullet-proof train to Kyiv under pressure of US that wants New Delhi to break its ties with its old friend Russia," Congress leader Rashid Alvi told Al Jazeera. "If the Indian arms are landing in Ukraine, then it is also due to machinations of the US."

Impact on the Russia-Ukraine war and India's hopes of mediating peace

In February, the German newspaper Der Spiegel reported that Germany was in talks with India to buy ammunition for Ukraine. The German Embassy in New Delhi refused to comment.

Meanwhile, India has tried to frame Modi's serial meetings with Zelenskyy and Putin — he will visit Russia for a second time in three months in October for the BRICS summit — as part of New Delhi's efforts to broker peace between Moscow and Kyiv.

Clary said he does not expect a small supply via third countries of Indian shells to Ukraine to complicate those peace efforts. But he does not see Modi succeeding in mediating peace either.

Even with India's recent overtures to Ukraine, Shanthie Mariet D'Souza, founder and president of the Goa-based think tank, Mantraya Institute for Strategic Studies, said New Delhi's traditionally warm ties with Moscow hurt its credibility as a mediator. "India's strong historical ties with Russia raise questions about India's neutrality," she told Al Jazeera.

She also agreed that for all of Modi's efforts, neither Russia nor Ukraine appeared interested in peace for now. "The war is currently at a complex stage, with both sides determined to settle it through military means," she said. "At the moment, it seems unlikely that there is any room for a peacemaker."

What there is room for are arms sales — including 'Made in India' shells fired on the battlefront. *—PTI*

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR سالار

Study: Ants reason for birds' diversity at higher grounds

A recent study from the Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES), Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru has uncovered a different factor driving bird species diversity at mid-elevations - the presence of ants from the Oecophylla genus.

"In mountains, you often see hump-shaped patterns (of species diversity), and for a long time, people have been interested in why this happens. One of the mechanisms they did not think much about was biotic interactions like competition," said Kartik Shanker, Professor at CES and co-author of the study published in 'Ecology Letters'.

Oecophylla ants, known for their aggressive and dominant behaviour, are voracious predators of insects at the bases of mountains found in the paleotropics, covering Africa, Asia and Oceania, stated a press release issued by IISc.

The researchers at IISc decided to test how the ants' presence affects the diversity of insect-eating birds, at lower elevations.

A previous study led by co-author Trevor D Price, Professor at the Department of Ecology and Evolution, University of Chicago, showed that the presence of Oecophylla ants at the base of the eastern Himalayas decreased the density of insects and might therefore have an effect on the presence of insect-eating birds, stated the release.

In the current study, the team wanted to see if this pattern was more widespread among other insect-eating species as well.

Led by Umesh Srinivasan, Assistant Professor at CES, the researchers used existing datasets with information about bird species observed at various elevations across different mountain ranges. They categorised the birds into dietary guilds – groups of species with similar dietary requirements, such as insectivores and omnivores.

"We looked at the ranges of these bird species. We noted what bird species (in each guild) occurred at 100 metres, then 200, 300 and so on, for every 100 metres," explained Srinivasan.

"We then classified mountain ranges with or without Oecophylla at the base, and looked at what species were present at elevations."

The researchers found patterns consistent with Oecophylla ants competing with insect-eating birds for food at lower elevations. This could then have ended up pushing these birds higher up in the mountains – the species diversity was highest at an elevation of about 960 metres. Other bird groups like nectar-eating and fruit-eating birds – which weren't competing with Oecophylla ants – reduced in species diversity as the elevation increased.

The presence or absence of Oecophylla ants at the base of mountains, therefore, was a good predictor of why the diversity of insect-eating birds peaked at mid-elevations, the team found.

"With climate change, if the ants shift their ranges towards higher elevations, this might impact the bird species at higher elevations as well," added Srinivasan.

Bengaluru-based ICAR-NBAIR discovers 63 new insect species

The ICAR - National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources (ICAR-NBAIR) has said it has discovered 63 new insect species in 2023-2024, significantly enhancing scientific understanding of agriculturally-important insects.

ICAR-NBAIR said in a statement it was granted five patents in the last financial year, further establishing its leadership in innovative pest management solutions, including -- Herbal-based repellent for termites on woody trees, Protocol for alcohol-free plywood-laced melon fly attractant, and 'Dorsa Lure', a plant volatile composition to increase the trap efficiency in mango fruit flies.

Additional biological control agents were released across various areas, greatly reducing the impact of pests, the institute said.

ICAR-NBAIR also commercialised 47 technologies, including microbial pesticides, pheromones, and insecticidal formulations. during the year.

"These technologies generated Rs 32.5 million in revenue, and the Bureau signed over 112 licensing agreements to promote their widespread use across industries," the statement said.

ICAR-NBAIR also developed and commercialised biological control agents to manage pests such as the fall armyworm and white grubs. These include novel insecticidal formulations and microbial pesticides, now available in the market, it was stated. *—PTI*

Oecophylla ants, known for their aggressive and dominant behaviour, are voracious predators of insects at the bases of mountains found in the paleotropics ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

China's Communist Party has ruled for 75 years. Will it make it to 100?

Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee (centre) shares a toast at a reception for the celebration of the 75th National Day of the People's Republic of China in Hong Kong, on Tuesday ***PHOTO: PTI***

More than three decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Communist Party of China retains a firm grip on power.

The powerful and feared organisation has ruled the nation, home to close to one-fifth of the world's population, for 75 years, surpassing the 74-year Soviet era in Russia.

The party survived years of self-inflicted tumult after it took control in 1949. A major course correction in 1978 transformed the country into an industrial giant with an economy second in size only to the United States.

Party leaders now want to build an even stronger China to achieve what they call the "rejuvenation" of the nation by 2049, which would mark the centennial of communist rule.

Staying in power that long will depend on how they manage in an era of slower growth and intensifying competition with the United States, one that has raised the specter of a new cold war.

The first quarter-century of communist rule in China wasn't pretty

Mao Zedong, after declaring the founding of the People's Republic of China on 1 October 1949, proved to be less adept at running a sprawling country than leading a revolution.

He invited intellectuals to criticize the party's rule in the Hundred Flowers Campaign in 1956, only to have many exiled to rural areas or imprisoned as protests about the government mounted.

The misguided polices of the Great Leap Forward, launched in 1958 to accelerate the industrialization of China, led to a devastating famine that killed tens of millions of people.

Then came the Cultural Revolution. Mao encouraged young Chinese to rise up against capitalist elements in 1966, sparking a brutal chaos in which intellectuals and teachers were beaten and publicly humiliated and sent to work in the countryside. Some were killed or driven to suicide.

It was only after Mao's death in 1976 that China set off on a new path that has unleashed the country's economic potential and lifted millions out of poverty.

China's development has defied conventional wisdom

During the Cold War, communism was associated with planned economies and democracy went with free markets.

The Chinese Communist Party has broken that mold. It has partially unleashed market forces while keeping at bay any democratic movement that could challenge its hold on power.

Western hopes that China would inevitably shift to democracy — as many other Asian states did after prospering economically — turned out to be wishful thinking.

The student-led protests that occupied Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989 were a turning point. After considerable internal debate, the party leadership under Deng Xiaoping sent in troops in a bloody end to the protests.

The message was clear: There would be economic liberalization but no political liberalization that could threaten the Communist Party's position.

The Communist Party is bringing back Marxism under Xi Jinping

The party has played up its importance to China's present and future as the economic boom years have given way to a phase of more moderate growth.

It has clamped down on dissent and other perceived threats to its rule. It has put renewed emphasis on the central role of the party and leader Xi Jinping in all matters and asserted stronger control over the economy, reining in the country's high-flying tech giants.

The shift has sparked fears among some workers, business owners and foreign investors that the party is restraining market forces just when the economy needs them to regain its footing.

Daniel Bell, a political theory expert at the University of Hong Kong, said that China's trajectory corresponds to the Marxist thought that a nation needs to go through a capitalist phase to develop the economy before transitioning to communism.

"There was a view that, you know, once China becomes capitalist, it's abandoning communism. But that was only meant to be temporary," said Bell, who outlined his thinking in a 2023 book, "The Dean of Shandong."

Party leaders have studied the end of the former Soviet Union and are determined to prevent a similar outcome in China.

But they face a new set of challenges in the coming quarter-century as the population ages and their economic and geopolitical ambitions put the country on a potential collision course with some of its neighbors and the world's reigning superpower, the United States. *—PTI*

Nepal death toll climbs to 217 after heavy floods

KATHMANDU, 1 OCT

The death toll from rain-induced floods and landslides across Nepal crossed 215-mark on Tuesday, while the number of those gone missing stands at 28, officials said. The disaster, which began on Thursday, continued to cause widespread destruction in multiple provinces until Sunday, leaving thou-sands displaced. Large swathes of eastern and central Nepal have been inundated since Friday. How-ever, the weather improved from Sunday in Kathmandu providing some relief to the disaster-affected people. The death toll in the flood and landslide triggered by three days of continuous rain in Kathman-du and various parts of Nepal has reached 217 as of Tuesday morning. So far, 28 people have been missing and 143 sustained injuries due to the natural disaster-related incidents. *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Coldplay as a band to retire after 2 more album

LOS ANGELES, 1 OCT

"Coldplay" frontman Chris Martin says the British rock band, as a unit, plans to release 12 "proper al-bums" out of which it has already put out 10, including the upcoming "Moon Music". The five-member group, also comprising guitarist Jonny Buckland, bassist Guy Berryman, drummer and percussionist Will Champion, and manager Phil Harvey, is currently on its "Music of the Spheres World Tour". In an interview with Apple Music's Zane Lowe, Martin said it's important to set a "limit" to what Coldplay needs to do as a group. "We are only going to do 12 proper albums, and that's real... because less is more. And for some of our critics, even less would be even more. It's really important that we have that limit. *—PTI*

South Korea unveils its most powerful missile

SEOUL, 1 OCT

South Korea unveiled its most powerful ballistic missile and other weapons targevting North Korea dur-ing a massive Armed Forces Day ceremony Tuesday, as the president warned the North's regime would collapse if it attempts to use nuclear weapons. South Korea's weapons displays and warning against North Korea came after its northern rival recently rose regional animosities by disclosing its uranium-enrichment facility and tested missiles ahead of the U.S. presidential election in November. "If North Korea attempts to use nuclear weapons, it will face the resolute and overwhelming response of our military and the-US alliance," President Yoon Suk Yeol told. *—AP*

SL's govt holds smallest Cabinet meeting ever

COLOMBO, 1 OCT

Sri Lanka's new National People's Power (NPP) government has held its first Cabinet meeting with just three ministers in attendance, according to officials. The new Cabinet Spokesman Vijitha Herath, who holds multiple ministries, said that he, along with the newly-appointed President Anura Kumara Dis-sanayake and the prime minister Dr Harini Amarasuriya, were the only attendees at Monday's meeting. It was the smallest Cabinet meeting ever, he said. Last week, President Dissanayake appointed his cab-inet of four, including himself, before dissolving the Parliament to call a snap election on November 14. The last parliament was convened in August 2020. The constitution limits the cabinet positions to 25 ministers. Herath said while same number would be maintained after they win next election, no ministers of state would be appointed. *—PTI*

Israel begins 'targeted ground raids' in Lebanon

Israeli shelling hits an area in southern Lebanon as seen from northern Israel, on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

Israeli airstrikes kill 6 in Lebanon refugee camp

JERUSALEM, 1 OCT

The Israeli military began what it called a "limited, localised" operation against Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon on Tuesday, carrying out "targeted ground raids" in villages close to the Israeli border. The targets, it said, pose an "immediate threat to Israeli communities in northern Israel".

Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu issued a warning on Monday to Iran, which backs Hezbollah and Hamas. "There is nowhere in the Middle East Israel cannot reach," Netanyahu said, just days after an airstrike south of Beirut killed the leader of the Lebanese Hezbollah group, which is backed by Tehran.

Hezbollah's acting leader, Naim Kassem, promised the group will fight on following the death Friday of its long-time chief Hassan Nasrallah. Israel has also assassinated several of the group's top command-ers in recent days. Kassem said the group's fighters are ready and the slain commanders have already been replaced.

Israel and Hezbollah have traded fire across the Lebanon border almost daily since October 8, the day after Hamas sent fighters into Israel and sparked the war in Gaza.

The scope of the incursion was unclear and there were no immediate reports of clashes between Israe-li troops and Hezbollah fighters. In a video statement released to media on Tuesday, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, a military spokesperson, said troops were operating against Hezbollah to ensure that Israeli citizens could return to their homes in the north. Lebanon's state news agency says an Israeli airstrike on a Palestinian refugee camp in south Lebanon killed six people, including the son of a Palestinian official.

The Israeli military says parts of south Lebanon are witnessing "intense fighting" and called on people not to enter the area south of the Litani River. Overnight and Tuesday morning, Hezbollah said it targeted groups of soldiers in several Israeli border areas with artillery shelling and rockets. *—PTI*

Smoke rises from the site of an Israeli airstrike in Beirut's southern suburb, Lebanon, on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

> **Every day, you see a regime that subjugates you. Don't let a small group of fanatic theocrats crush your hopes and your dreams. Your children deserve better. The people of Iran should know – Israel stands with you.**
>
> —Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel Prime Minister

Nasrallah suffocated to death from toxic fumes, says report

TEL AVIV, 1 OCT

An Israeli news outlet has claimed Hezbollah Chief Hassan Nasrallah may have "suffocated" from toxic gasses inside his secret bunker after it was demolished by an Israeli airstrike.

Officials pulled Nasrallah out of the bunker on Sunday, finding his body intact with no visible wounds on him, Israel's Channel 12 reported. This suggested he was buried by rubble after 80 tons of bunker-busting bombs were dropped on his fortified hideout on Friday.

The Israeli outlet claims the cave-in caused the 64-year-old to suffocate and die in "agony" as the room filled with fumes from the smoke and explosions. Medical and security officials said that he was most likely killed by blunt trauma.

Hezbollah officials have kept quiet on the details of Nasrallah's death, with the terror chief's body transported to a nearby hospital in the capital. *—Courtesy, Skynews*

MANY INJURED

25 students dead as school bus catches fire in Bangkok

BANGKOK, 1 OCT

A bus carrying young students with their teachers caught fire in suburban Bangkok on Tuesday, with at least 25 of those on board feared dead, officials and rescuers said.

The bus was carrying 44 passengers from central Uthai Thani province for a school trip in Ayutthaya and Nonthaburi provinces, Transport Minister Suriya Jungrungruengkit told reporters at the scene. Vid-eos posted on social media showed the entire bus engulfed in fire with huge plumes of black smoke pouring out as it stood on the side of the road. Bodies were still inside the bus hours after the fire.

The students on the bus were reported to be in elementary and junior high school. Interior Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said officials could not yet confirm the number of fatalities because they had not finished investigating the scene. He said the driver survived but appeared to have fled and could not yet be found.

Anutin had earlier said 25 were feared dead, but Piyalak Thinkaew, a rescuer of the Ruamkatanyu Foundation told reporters later that two more survivors had been found, reducing the number of those still missing to 23 — three teachers and 20 students. Rescuers and officials were able to access the bus hours after the fire was put out. Piyalak said they were still unable to identify the bodies, most of which were found in the middle and back seats, leading them to assume that the fire started at the front of the bus.

A rescuer at the scene told Suriya that the fire likely started after one of the tires exploded and the ve-hicle scraped against a road barrier. *—PTI*

Rescuers gather at the site of a bus that caught fire, carrying school students with their teachers, in suburban Bangkok, on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

Ishiba Shigeru will announce his new Cabinet later on Wednesday *PHOTO: X@JPN_PMO*

Shigeru becomes Japan's 102nd PM

TOKYO, 1 OCT

Japan's Parliament on Tuesday formally elected Shigeru Ishiba, head of the governing Liberal Democratic Party, as the country's new prime minister.

Ishiba was chosen as the party's leader on Friday to replace Fumio Kishida, who then stepped down earlier on Tuesday to pave the way.

Ishiba will announce his new Cabinet later on Tuesday. Kishida took office in 2021 but left so his party could have a fresh leader after his government was dogged by scandals. Ishiba plans to call a parlia-mentary election for 27 October. Opposition parties criticised Ishiba for allowing only a short period of time for his policies to be examined and discussed in parliament before the national election.

Kishida had announced in August he would resign at the end of his three-year term. Kishida and his min-isters stepped down at a Cabinet meeting on Tuesday morning, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said. Kishida left his office after a brief send-off ceremony in which he was presented a bouquet of red roses and applauded by his staff and former Cabinet members. *—PTI*

WHO IS ISHIBA SHIGERU?

Age: 67

Education: Faculty of Law, Keio University

Family: Wife and 2 children

No. of times elected as lawmaker: 12

PAST CAREER

- Defence Minister
- Agricultural Minister
- Liberal Democratic Party Secy Gen

NATO CHIEF HANDS OVER TO EX-DUTCH PM MARK RUTTE

BRUSSELS, 1 OCT

One of NATO's longest serving top officials, Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, stepped down on Tuesday, handing over the reins to former Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte as the military alliance confronts some of the biggest challenges in its history.

The two men, who first sat together at NATO's table 14 years ago as the leaders of Norway and the Netherlands, greeted each other warmly outside the alliance's Brussels headquarters, before laying a wreath to fallen military personnel, surrounded by the flags of the 32 member countries. "Rutte has the perfect background to become a great secretary general," a visibly emotional Stoltenberg said as he ended a decade in office. "He has served as prime minister for 14 years and led four different coali-tion governments, so therefore he knows how to make compromises, create consensus, and these are skills which are very much valued here at NATO," Stoltenberg said.

Rutte said that he "cannot wait to get to work." Rutte said his priorities would be NATO's support for Ukraine, with the war now in its third year, increasing defence spending and strengthening partnerships that the alliance has established with other countries around the world. *—PTI*

Mark Rutte *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

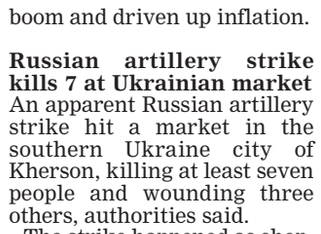
Russia to raise defence budget by 25% to highest level on record

MOSCOW, 1 OCT

Russia is to increase its spending on defence by 25 per cent to its highest on record, as Vladimir Putin vows to continue his war efforts in Ukraine and further escalate his standoff with the west.

The latest planned increase in spending will take Russia's defence budget to a record 13.5tn Rubles in 2025, according to draft budget documents published on Monday on the parliament's website. That is about 3tn Rubles more than was set aside for defence this year, which was the previous record.

Taken together, spending on defence and security will account for about 40% of Russia's total government spending – or 41.5tn Rubles in 2025.The 2025 budget suggests Putin has embraced what economists have dubbed "military Keynesianism", marked by a significant rise in military spending, which has fuelled the war in Ukraine, spurred a con-sumer spending boom and driven up inflation.



Vladimir Putin *PHOTO: PTI*

Russian artillery strike kills 7 at Ukrainian market

An apparent Russian artillery strike hit a market in the southern Ukraine city of Kherson, killing at least seven people and wounding three others, authorities said.

The strike happened as shoppers made their way between stalls at the city centre market, regional Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin said.

He published a video showing the blurred corpses of people in civilian clothes lying near a stall with tomatoes and other vegetables.

—The Guardian/ PTI

Russian jet flying within feet of US F-16 near Alaska

ANCHORAGE, 1 OCT

Military officials have released new video of a startling encounter between a Russian fighter jet flying near Alaska and a US Air Force F-16 sent to intercept it. In the video released on Monday, the Russian plane comes from behind the camera and swoops by the US jet, just feet from the aircraft. The video release of the close encounter September 23, with the US pilot under the direction of the North American Aerospace Defence Command, comes after a series of Russian incursions into the Alaska Air Defence Identification Zone just beyond US sovereign airspace. The interaction drew condemnation from NORAD's top officer and one of Alaska's US senators. *—PTI*

Inflation in Europe falls below 2%

FRANKFURT, 1 OCT

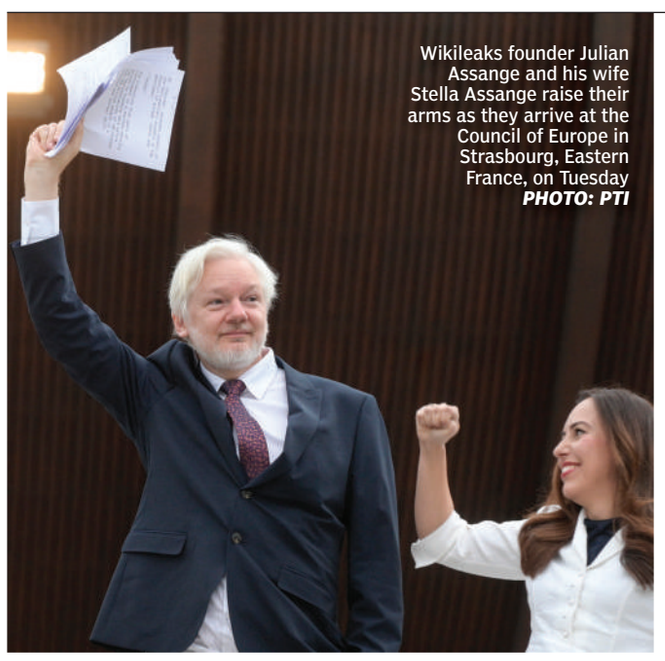
Inflation in the 20 countries that use the euro fell to 1.8 per cent in September, below the European Central Bank's target of 2 per cent for the first time in more than three years as falling energy prices give consumers relief from a burst of inflation that at one point reached into double digits.

Tuesday's official figure coupled with an anemic growth outlook could pave the way for faster interest rate cuts from the ECB, which has already trimmed rates twice.

Inflation fell from 2.2 per cent in August, according to European Union statistics agency Eurostat. The last time inflation hit the ECB's 2 per cent goal was in June, 2021 when it was 1.9 per cent.

- Official figure coupled with an anemic growth outlook could pave the way for faster interest rate cuts from the ECB

Economists have started to consider the possibility of a rate cut at the bank's October 17 meeting. A few weeks ago, the expectations were that the central bank would wait until December before lowering borrowing costs again for consumers and businesses. The bank must juggle the need to make sure inflation is under control, which would mean waiting longer to lower rates, against concerns over slow economic growth, which would argue for swifter cuts. The ECB, US Federal Reserve and other central banks rapidly raised rates to combat a burst of inflation that broke out as the economy rebounded from the pandemic, straining supplies of parts and raw materials, and after Russia invaded Ukraine. *—PTI*



Wikileaks founder Julian Assange and his wife Stella Assange raise their arms as they arrive at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, Eastern France, on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

'CHOSE FREEDOM OVER JUSTICE'

I pled guilty to journalism: Julian Assange

NICE, 1 OCT

WikiLeaks Founder Julian Assange said on Tuesday that he was freed after years of incarceration be-cause he "pled guilty to journalism".

Assange gave evidence of the impact of his detention and conviction to the legal affairs and human rights committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France. The Parliamentary Assembly includes lawmakers from 46 European countries.

Assange was released in June after five years in a British prison after he pleaded guilty to obtaining and publishing US military secrets in a deal with Justice Department prosecutors that concluded a drawn-out legal saga. Prior to his time in prison, he had spent seven years in self-imposed exile in the Ecuado-rian Embassy in London, where he claimed asylum on the grounds of political persecution.

The transition from years of confinement in a maximum security prison to addressing the European parliamentarians has been a "profound and a surreal shift", Assange said as he detailed the experience of years of isolation in a small cell. "I'm not yet fully equipped to speak about what I have endured — the relentless struggle to stay alive, both physically and mentally," Assange said. The Australian internet publisher was accused of receiving and publishing hundreds of thousands of war logs and diplomatic cables that included details of US mil-itary wrongdoing in Iraq and Afghanistan. His activities were celebrated by press freedom advocates, who heralded his role in bringing to light military conduct that might otherwise have been concealed. Among the files published by WikiLeaks was a video of a 2007 Apache helicopter attack by American forces in Baghdad that killed 11 people, including two Reuters journalists. Assange pleaded guilty to an Espionage Act charge of conspiring to unlawfully obtain and disseminate classified national defense information. A judge sentenced him to the five years he had already spent behind bars in the UK fighting extradition to the United States. *—PTI*

> **I am not free today because the system worked. I am free today because I pled guilty to journalism. I pled guilty to seeking information from a source. I pled guilty to obtaining information from a source. And I pled guilty to informing the public what that information was**
>
> —Julian Assange, WikiLeaks Founder

Gold snaps 10-day rally; declines ₹200 to ₹78,100

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

Gold prices declined by Rs 200 to Rs 78,100 per 10 grams, snapping a 10-day winning streak, in the national capital on Tuesday, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal closed at Rs 78,300 per 10 grams on Monday. However, silver remained flat at Rs 92,500 per kilogram on Tuesday. Additionally, gold of 99.5 per cent purity fell by Rs 200 to Rs 77,700 per 10 grams. It had finished at Rs 77,900 per 10 grams in the previous close on Monday. Meanwhile, in futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for December delivery jumped by Rs 347 or 0.46 per cent to Rs 75,958 per 10 grams. Silver also climbed Rs 441 or 0.49 per cent to trade at Rs 91,160 per kg on the bourse. In the Asian trading hours, Comex gold is trading 0.34 per cent higher at USD 2,668.50 per ounce. *—PTI*

Rupee settles 3P lower at 83.82 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 1 OCT

Rupee stayed in a narrow range and settled 3 paise lower at 83.82 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday amid subdued equity markets, unabated outflow of foreign funds and strengthening American currency. However, crude oil prices sliding to near USD 70 per barrel helped the local unit resist a steep fall, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange, the local unit opened at 83.81 and moved between the low of 83.83 and high of 83.80 against the greenback during the session. The unit finally settled at 83.82 (provisional), registering a loss of 3 paise from its previous closing level. On Monday, the rupee settled 10 paise lower at 83.79 against the American currency. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength, rose 0.27 per cent to 100.79. *—PTI*

Aditya Infotech files ₹1,300 cr IPO papers with SEBI

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

Aditya Infotech has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator SEBI to raise Rs 1,300 crore through an Initial Public Offering (IPO). The company's proposed IPO is a combination of a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 500 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of shares valued Rs 800 crore by promoters, as per the draft papers. Proceeds from the fresh to the tune of Rs 375 crore have been earmarked for payment of debt and besides a portion will be used for general corporate purposes. The company had a total borrowings of Rs 405.45 crore as of March 2024, the draft filed on Monday showed. Aditya Infotech offers a comprehensive range of advanced video security and surveillance products, technologies and solutions for enterprise and consumer segments under 'CP PLUS' brand. In addition, the company offers solutions and services such as fully integrated security systems. *—PTI*

Ravi Ahuja named President, CEO of Sony Pictures

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

Japan's Sony Group Corporation and Sony Pictures Entertainment (SPE) on Tuesday announced the elevation of Ravi Ahuja as President and CEO of SPE effective 2 January, 2025. Ahuja, SPE's current Chairman of Global Television Studios and President and COO, will take over from SPE Chairman and CEO Tony Vinciquerra, who will step down from his role as SPE CEO, Sony group said in a statement. Vinciquerra will remain in an advisory role for SPE as non-executive Chairman until the end of December 2025, it added. Ahuja joined SPE in 2021 to oversee all production businesses. *—PTI*

Tata's AI Express completes merger with AIX Connect

Merged entity's fleet is expected to cross 100 planes by 2025

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

PHOTO: ANI

Marking a significant consolidation in the Indian airline space, Air India Group on Tuesday completed the merger of low-cost carrier AIX Connect with Air India Express and the merged entity's fleet is expected to cross 100 planes by the end of March next year.

The merger -- completed in less than a year, will see the entity operating under the name 'Air India Express' and airline code 'IX' -- and Air India chief Campbell Wilson described the completion of the integration as an "important milestone" in the transformation journey.

Aviation regulator DGCA on Tuesday said the merger of AIX Connect with Air India Express sets a new benchmark for future airline consolidation in the country.

"Effective 1 October, 2024, all aircraft of AIX Connect have been transferred seamlessly onto the Air Operator Certificate (AOC) of AIX, ensuring that airline operations of the combined entity continue without disruption to ensure a safe and smooth passenger experience," DGCA said in a release.

Both airlines are part of Tata Group, which will also be merging Vistara with Air India next month.

The merger involved the harmonisation of operational manuals across the two low-cost carriers and, the transfer of aircraft, besides operational, safety and maintenance approvals.

Wilson said the integration of AIX Connect with Air India Express is an important milestone in Air India's Vihaan.ai transformation journey and that the merged entity will cater to the growing demand for air travel around India and in the region.

He is the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Air India and the Chairman of Air India Express.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said it will closely monitor post-merger operations to ensure ongoing compliance with all regulatory conditions, safeguarding consumer interests and ensuring the continued safety of air operations in India.

India is one of fastest-growing aviation markets. *—PTI*

SpiceJet clears 4 months' pending salary of employees

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

PHOTO: PTI

After clearing pending GST dues, airline SpiceJet has credited the four months pending salaries of its employees.

The airline had been grappling with financial woes and unpaid employee salaries for the past many months.

A week ago, the airline has cleared all pending salaries, much to the relief of its workforce, ahead of the festive season.

"I am still in shock! Getting four months' salary in the last five days was unexpected. It's like Diwali came early!" said Vishnu Prasad, an executive at reservations department.

A airport staff, Deepak Singh, still processing the sudden shift, remarked, "I honestly couldn't believe it when I saw my account. Three months of salary paid in one go and then getting my September salary on time, it's a huge relief."

These developments have come after the airline raised Rs 3,000 crore through a Qualified Institutional Placement (QIP).

The QIP attracted a diverse range of top-tier institutional investors and funds, including marquee names such as Goldman Sachs (Singapore), Morgan Stanley Asia, Tata Mutual Fund, and Discovery Global Opportunity Ltd.

- The airline had been grappling with financial woes and unpaid employee salaries for the past many months

Along with employee dues, the airline has also cleared outstanding GST payments, signalling a broader effort to rectify its financial standing.

With plans to introduce new aircraft, expand its routes, and restore its network, SpiceJet is signalling its intent to regain a stronger position in the competitive aviation market. *—PTI*

SENSEX CLOSES AT 84,266.29 PTS

Market settles flat in highly volatile trade

MUMBAI, 1 OCT

M Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty edged lower on Tuesday, extending the losing run to the third day amid profit-taking in oil & gas and select FMCG shares.

The BSE Sensex dipped 33.49 points or 0.04 per cent to settle at 84,266.29. During the day, it hit a high of 84,648.40 and a low of 84,098.94.

The NSE Nifty closed marginally lower by 13.95 points or 0.05 per cent to 25,796.90.

Muted trends in global markets and heavy foreign fund outflows weighed on investor sentiment, analysts said.

From the 30 Sensex firms, IndusInd Bank, Asian Paints, Hindustan Unilever, Tata Motors, Tata Steel, Titan, Reliance Industries and NTPC were among the major laggards..

Tech Mahindra, Mahindra & Mahindra, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Infosys, HCL Technologies and State Bank of India were among the major gainers.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 9,791.93 crore on Monday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought equities worth Rs 6,645.80 crore, according to exchange data. *—PTI*

Bajaj & Mahindra's sales rise in Sept

Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) Ltd on Tuesday said its tractor sales increased 2 per cent to 44,256 units in September 2024 from 43,210 units sold in the same month last year. Of the total sales in the previous month, domestic sales were 43,201 units, up 3 per cent from 2023.

JSW & Ashok Leyland retail sales fall

JSW MG Motor India on Tuesday reported an 8 per cent year-on-year decline in retail sales at 4,588 units in September. It had sold 5,003 units last year. Commercial vehicle maker Ashok Leyland reported a 10 per cent year-on-year drop in its sales. *—PTI*

WB govt urges tea gardens to pay 16% bonus to workers

KOLKATA, 1 OCT

PHOTO: PTI

West Bengal government's Labour department on Tuesday issued an advisory to disburse bonus to workers of tea gardens of Darjeeling, Kurseong and Kalimpong at 16 per cent for the fiscal 2023-24.

The government said this advisory has been issued to maintain parity throughout the tea industry in West Bengal as the gardens of Dooars and Terai regions of North Bengal have decided to pay bonus at 16 per cent for the last financial year.

Subsequently, the management of the gardens agreed to pay bonus at 13 per cent but the unions stuck to their demand of 20 per cent resulting in a deadlock.

According to the government, an industry-wide settlement has been already made to pay bonus at 16 per cent in North Bengal, disbursement of the same has started in full swing there.

While the Durga Puja and Dussehra festivals are very near, it has become urgent and necessary that the bonus payment to the workers of North Bengal gardens should start without any further delay by the management. *—PTI*

DUE TO RISE IN SALES

On the price front, there were moderate increases in input costs and selling charges PHOTO: PTI

India's manufacturing sector growth slips to 8-month low

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

India's manufacturing sector growth fell to an eight-month low in September amid softer increase in factory production, sales and new export orders, a monthly survey said on Tuesday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) fell from 57.5 in August to 56.5 in September, registering the weakest pace of growth since January.

In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

September PMI data revealed a mild setback in manufacturing growth across India. For the third straight month, rates of expansion in factory production and sales receded. Moreover, international orders rose at the slowest pace in a year-and-a-half.

On the price front, there were moderate increases in input costs and selling charges.

As a result of rising purchasing prices, as well as greater labour costs and favourable demand conditions, Indian manufacturers marginally increased their charges in September.

According to Bhandari, input prices rose at a faster rate in September, while factory gate price inflation eased, intensifying the compression on manufacturers' margin.

Hiring growth also receded in September, reflecting a reduction in the number of part-time and temporary workers.

Going ahead, the overall level of business confidence fell to its lowest since April 2023. Around 23 per cent of Indian manufacturers forecast output growth in the year ahead, while the remaining firms predict no change. *—PTI*

SEBI to take steps for F&O; calls for tax breaks

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

Capital markets regulator SEBI is expected to take measures regarding the Futures and Options (F&O) segment very soon, in a bid to enhance investor protection, its senior official said on Tuesday.

In addition, SEBI has urged the government to introduce tax breaks for subscribers of municipal bonds, which are crucial for funding infrastructure development.

The regulator will make a case for a tax break for municipal bonds during a meeting with the finance commission, the regulator's whole time member Ashwani Bhatia said here.

Since 1997, municipalities have raised Rs 2,700 crore through bonds for infrastructure projects.

Talking about F&O, Bhatia said," SEBI is very soon going to do something about F&O. Study has come (recently)".

The regulator, in its consultation paper recently, proposed seven measures to tighten the rules for index derivatives-- revise the minimum contract size and require upfront collection of option premiums intra-day monitoring of position limits, rationalisation of strike prices etc. *—PTI*

The loan book outstanding stood at Rs 64,500 crore PHOTO: PTI

IREDA loan sanctions jump 300% to ₹ 17,869 cr

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd (IREDA) has said that its loan sanctions jumped 303 per cent year-on-year to Rs 17,860 crore in the April-September period of this fiscal.

Loan disbursements also saw significant growth, increasing by 56 per cent to Rs 9,787 crore from Rs 6,273 crore recorded in September 2023, the company said in a statement on Monday.

The company's loan book outstanding stood at Rs 64,500 crore, up 36 per cent from Rs 47,514 crore in the previous year.

"IREDA's strong financial results highlight the increasing demand for clean energy financing and our dedication to supporting the green energy transition," Pradip Kumar Das, CMD of IREDA, said. *—PTI*

Sun Pharma inks pact for cancer medicines

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

Sun Pharmaceutical Industries on Tuesday said it has inked a global licensing pact with Italian-Swiss firm Philogen for an anti-cancer drug.

As per the agreement, Sun Pharma will have the exclusive worldwide rights to commercialise Fibromun, a speciality product of Philogen.

Fibromun, an innovative anti-cancer immunotherapy, is being investigated in registration trials by Philogen for the treatment of soft tissue sarcoma and glioblastoma.

PHOTO: PTI

As per the pact, Philogen will complete the ongoing pivotal clinical trials for the product, pursue marketing authorisation with regulatory authorities, and manufacture commercial supplies, the Mumbai-based drug major said in a statement.

Sun Pharma will be responsible for commercialisation activities, it added.

The two partner companies will share post-commercialisation economics in about 45(Philogen):55(Sun Pharma) ratio, Sun Pharma said.

The company did not disclose other financial terms. "Fibromun's progress through development has been quite encouraging and it has potential to be an important option for treatment of soft-tissue sarcomas and other cancers with significant unmet medical needs," Sun Pharma Chairman and MD Dilip Shanghvi said.

The partnership expands company's clinical pipeline into oncology in alignment with current portfolio in skin cancers, he added. *—PTI*

DOUBLE DHAMAKA

Festive season sales see 20% spike in orders

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

The first four days of the 2024 festive season sale (26th - 29th September) saw a 20 per cent increase in order volumes compared to the same period last year (7th - 10th October 2023) and gross merchandise value (GMV) also surged by 24 per cent, according to a report by Unicommerce.

Unicommerce's analysis of over 1.3 million order items processed through its platform during the initial sale days in both years revealed noteworthy growth across several product categories.

Fashion and accessories recorded an impressive 32 per cent rise, driven by high demand for travel accessories, watches, and kids' apparel.

Fashion and accessories recorded an impressive 32% rise PHOTO: X

The makeup segment saw a spectacular 54 per cent year-on-year (YoY) growth, reflecting a significant consumer interest in beauty products.

The health and pharma segment also demonstrated strong performance, registering a 33 per cent rise in volumes, with nutraceuticals and fitness supplements leading the way in demand.

In the home decor segment, while volumes only experienced a marginal increase, the category reported a remarkable over 50 per cent jump in GMV.

Other product categories that saw a surge in demand include phone accessories, books, sports and fitness products, and healthy snacks, further highlighting the diversity of consumer preferences during the festive season.

With more festive sales events lined up in October for Navratri, Dussehra, Karva Chauth, Diwali, and other celebrations, the early momentum indicates a robust season ahead for India's e-commerce industry. *—ANI*

Digi Yatra to be made available in all languages

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

PHOTO: PTI

Digi Yatra, which seeks to provide seamless movement at airport check points, will be made available in regional and international languages, according to a senior official.

The facility is now available at 24 airports and is expected to be rolled out at 4-5 more airports in the coming months.

Digi Yatra Foundation CEO Suresh Khadakbhavi on Tuesday said a pilot project is likely by June next year for connecting two countries with Digi Yatra.

Speaking at the CAPA India Digital Aviation Summit in the national capital, Khadakbhavi said a campaign will be started to sensitise passengers about the facility.

While Digi Yatra is slowly gaining traction, concerns have been expressed in various quarters about the privacy of data of the passengers.

He said Digi Yatra will be made available in regional and international languages.

Based on Facial Recognition Technology (FRT), Digi Yatra provides for contactless, seamless movement of passengers at various check points at airports. *—PTI*

HERSTORY

The 9th edition of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup is set to begin from tomorrow and will see 27 games featuring 10 teams played across 2 cities in the UAE. Here is all you need to know:

Group-A India, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan and Sri Lanka

Group-B Bangladesh, England, Scotland, South Africa and West Indies

Why is it happening in UAE and not Bangladesh?

In July 2022, ICC announced Bangladesh as the host country. However, in August 2024, the tournament was moved to the UAE after civil unrest in Bangladesh.

Duration: 3-20 October

VENUE: UAE

Dubai Intl Cricket Stadium

Sharjah Cricket Stadium

PRIZE MONEY

₹19.59 cr
WINNER

₹9.79 cr
RUNNER-UP

Highest total by a team:
England, 2023
(**213** vs Pakistan)

Lowest total by a team:
Pakistan, 2018
(**46** vs West Indies)

Largest margin by Innings:
England, 2023
(**114** runs vs Pak)

Most Runs

Suzie Bates
1,066
Country: NZ

Highest Strike Rates & Most Dismissals

Alyssa Healy
126
Country: Australia
Dismissals:
29
Runs:
941

Most Wickets

Shabnim Ismail
Country: South Africa
Wicket
43

Best Economy

Karishma Ramharack
Country: West Indies
Economy
4.16

Most Sixes

Deandra Dottin
Country: West Indies
6s:22

High scores & Most Matches as Captain

Meg Lanning
126
Country: Australia

Strike Rate:
193.84
Caps:
30

Highest Partnerships

Nat Sciver-Brunt and Heather Knight
Country: England
Runs:
169 *(Not Out)*

Most 5 Wickets In Innings

Renuka Singh
Country: India
5 Wickets:
1 time

Best Bowling Avg

Grace Harris
Country: Australia
Average:
3.50

ROLL OF HONOUR

2023: Australia	**2016:** West Indies
2020: Australia	
2018: Australia	**2014:** Australia

Research: Saptarshi | **Design:** Mahesh K

PHOTO: X

Kohli gifts his bat to retiring Shakib al Hasan

KANPUR, 1 OCT

Indian batting superstar Virat Kohli gifted one of his signed bats to the soon-to-be-retired Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan after the home side completed a 2-0 Test series sweep over the visitors here on Tuesday.

Shakib, who played his last overseas Test here, has already made it clear that he wouldn't play the home series against South Africa unless the current caretaker government in Bangladesh can ensure his smooth passage out of the country.

After the second Test ended here with India winning by seven wickets, Kohli was seen walking toward the Bangladesh team and handing over his bat to Bangladesh's greatest-ever cricketer.The duo was seen exchanging pleasantries and sharing a laugh as Shakib did a bit of shadow-driving with the willow.

Shakib is a popular cricketer in India, having played 71 IPL matches—*PTI*

Tushar Deshpande undergoes ankle surgery in London

MUMBAI, 1 OCT

India and Mumbai pacer Tushar Deshpande underwent ankle surgery in London after missing the second round of the recently concluded Duleep Trophy. The right-arm pacer informed about his surgery in a social media post on Tuesday. He was left out of Mumbai's 30-man probable list for the upcoming Ranji Trophy season. "This post comes as an update about my ankle surgery which was done yesterday and went very well," he said. "It is a great relief as I was dealing with it for quite a long time.—*PTI*

Ronaldo scores winner for Al-Nassr in AFC

RIYADH 1 OCT

Cristiano Ronaldo scored the winning goal as Al-Nassr of Saudi Arabia defeated Al-Rayyan of Qatar 2-1 in the AFC Champions League Elite group stage on Monday. The five-time Ballon d'Or winner missed Al-Nassr's opening 1-1 draw against Al-Shorta of Iraq two weeks ago because of a viral infection. On Monday, he had a goal ruled out for offside, but his shot into the top corner with 14 minutes remaining in Riyadh proved to be decisive. Former Liverpool forward Sadio Mane headed home for Al-Nassr just before the break and the points seemed secure when Ronaldo added a second. —*PTI*

PHOTO: @REALMADRID

Goalie Courtois to miss Champions League game

MADRID, 1 OCT

Goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois will miss Real Madrid's match at Lille in the Champions League on Wednesday because of a muscle injury. Following tests on Monday, Courtois was diagnosed with an abductor injury in his left leg, Madrid said. Courtois was hurt in the 1-1 draw at Atletico Madrid in the Spanish league derby on Sunday. He played the entire match at Metropolitano Stadium. Madrid began the defense of its Champions League title by beating Stuttgart 3-1 at home. Included in Madrid's squad was Kylian Mbappé, who missed the derby against Atletico because of a hamstring injury.—*PTI*

India fight rain demons to win 2nd Test, sweep series

India completed a record-extending 18th series win

Player Ravichandran Ashwin receives the player of the series trophy after India won the Second Test cricket match against Bangladesh PHOTO: PTI

KANPUR, 1 OCT

Yashasvi Jaiswal scored another half-century as India defeated Bangladesh by seven wickets in the weather-hit second Test to make a clean sweep of the two-Test series here on Tuesday.

India, after dismissing Bangladesh for 146 runs in the second innings, thanks to three-wicket hauls by Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, and Jasprit Bumrah, achieved the victory target of 95 runs in 17.2 overs, with Jaiswal and Kohli scoring 51 and unbeaten 29 runs respectively.

Earlier, Ashwin (3/50), Jadeja (3/34), and Bumrah (3/17) broke the back of the Bangladesh batting, allowing them the addition of just 120 runs to their overnight total of 26/2.

Overnight batter Shadman Islam was the highest scorer for Bangladesh in the second innings, scoring 50 runs.

The lunch session was extended by nearly an hour to complete Bangladesh's innings.

Bangladesh were bundled out for 233 in their first innings before India scored a quick-fire 285/9 and declared their innings on Monday in a match in which two days were completely lost due to a wet outfield.

Brief scores: Bangladesh 233 all out and 146 all out in 47 overs (Shadman Islam 50; Ravichandran Ashwin 3/50, Ravindra Jadeja 3/34, Jasprit Bumrah 3/17) vs India 285/9 declared in 34.4 overs and 98 for 3 in 17.2 overs (Yashasvi Jaiswal 51, Virat Kohli 29 not out). —*PTI*

We were willing to get all out for 100: Rohit

India was willing to take the risk of being bowled for 100-odd in its bold push for a result in the weather-hit second Test against Bangladesh, said Rohit Sharma after the hosts pulled off a dramatic win here on Tuesday.India managed to win the game comfortably on day five despite two full days being lost due to a wet outfield at the Green Park. Even on day one, only 35 overs are possible.After bowling out Bangladesh for 233, India batted in T20 mode to smash 285 in 34.4 overs before declaring their first innings. Having lost two batters overnight, Bangladesh were bowled out in their second innings at the stroke of lunch and India ended the game in the second session.

CHINA OPEN

Pegula out after 4th-round loss to Badosa

BEIJING, 1 OCT

Paula Badosa reeled off 11 of the last 12 games in a 6-4, 6-0 victory over US Open finalist Jessica Pegula at the China Open on Tuesday to reach her eighth career quarter-final at a WTA 1000-level event.

From 3-1 down in the opening set, former No. 2-ranked Badosa dominated in her first-ever win over third-ranked Pegula. "She's one the of the players I never want to face she's very solid, hits very flat, changes very well direction," said Badosa, who was 0-3 previously against Pegula. "I prepared myself for a battle, but I think today everything worked pretty well.

"Every point was very important for me, especially against Jessica, because she can come back at any moment." Badosa next faces 35-year-old Chinese player Zhang Shuai, who continued her resurgence with a 6-4, 6-2 win over Magdalena Frech of Poland. Zhang entered the China Open on a 24-match losing streak and ranked No. 595, but she's yet to drop a set in four matches this week. That includes eliminating US Open semi-finalist Emma in straight sets for her first win over a Top 10 player. —*PTI*

Paula Badosa PHOTO: @CHINAOPEN

Alcaraz reaches final

Third-ranked Carlos Alcaraz's athleticism was again on show as he advanced to the final of the China Open with a 7-5, 6-3 victory over Daniil Medvedev on Tuesday. "I felt great on the court once again, so I'm really happy about it," Alcaraz said. "I think I couldn't ask for a better semifinal." The four-time Grand Slam champion including this year's French Open and Wimbledon extended his head-to-head record against the Russian to 6-2.

Hockey India lists 40 probables for Germany

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

Hockey India on Tuesday announced a 40-member core probable squad for the senior men's national coaching camp in Bengaluru to prepare for the upcoming two-match home series against world champions Germany.

The team for the two matches against Germany to be played at Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium here on 23 and 24 October will be selected from the camp.The camp will run from 1 to 19 October.The team heads into this camp following their recent successes including a second consecutive bronze medal at the Paris Olympics and a successful title defense at the Asian Champions Trophy in China.

The Probables: GOAL KEEPERS: 1. Krishan Bahadur Pathak; 2. Pawan; 3. Suraj Karkera; 4. MohithDEFENDERS: 1. Jarmanpreet Singh; 2. Amit Rohidas; 3. Harmanpreet Singh; 4. Sumit; 5. Sanjay; 6. Jugraj Singh; 7. Amandeep

PHOTO: PTI

Lakra; 8. Nilam Sanjeep Xess; 9. Varun Kumar; 10. Yashdeep Siwach; 11. Dipsan Tirkey; 12. Mandeep Mor MIDFIELDERS: 1. Rajkumar Pal; 2. Shamsher Singh; 3. Manpreet Singh; 4. Hardik Singh; 5. Vivek Sagar Prasad; 6. Nilakanta Sharma; 7. Moirangthem Rabichandra Singh;8. Mohammed Raheel Mouseen; 9. Vishnukant Singh; 10. Rajinder Singh; 11. Poovanna CBFORWARDS; 1. Abhishek; 2. Sukhjeet Singh; 3. Lalit Kumar Upadhyay; 4. Mandeep Singh; 5. Gurjant Singh; 6. Angad Bir Singh; 7. Aditya Lalage; 8. Boby Singh Dhami; 9. Sudeep Chirmako; 10. S. Karthi; 11. Maninder Singh; 12. Shilanand Lakra;13. Dilpreet Singh. —*PTI*

WOMEN'S T20 WORLD CUP

When it comes to team, I give my life: Rodrigues

DUBAI, 1 OCT

Jemimah Rodrigues feels adaptability and maintaining a team-first mentality will be key for India to achieve their dream of claiming a maiden ICC title at the T20 World Cup beginning here on Thursday.

India, who reached the finals of the women's T20 World Cup in 2020, will start their campaign in the ninth edition of the tournament against New Zealand on 4 October. "For me, it's all about assessing the conditions and playing the situation. I just want to keep it simple and do whatever it takes to help the team win and whatever the team needs," Rodrigues, who hit a 52 in the first warm-up game against West Indies, told Star Sports. "When I put things in that perspective, it gets the best out of me and motivates me. For me, whenever it comes to the team, I go and give my life out there. That gets me more passionate, energetic, and enthusiastic. I want Team India to win. We, as a unit, want Team

Jemimah Rodrigues PHOTO: PTI

India to win. For me, it's all about keeping it in that perspective."

The 24-year-old from Mumbai emphasized the importance of playing to the situation irrespective of the bowler. "For me, it's not about specific bowlers but about playing to the situation. Bowlers can have off days, and as a batter, I need to assess which bowler to attack and when to hold back. The satisfaction comes from playing smart and doing what's best for the team."

In other ICC events, India has reached the finals of ODI World Cups in 2005 and 2017 but never gone the distance.

Harmanpreet Kaur and Co, meanwhile, made a good start by winning the first warm-up match against West Indies by 20 runs.

"For this team, it's a mix of absolute youngsters and some like me who have had experience. Richa (Ghosh) and Shafali (Verma) have also played World Cups before, so we are young but not inexperienced," Rodrigues said.

"Then we have Harman and Smriti (Mandhana), who have played more World Cups than all of us. That coming together is the strength of this team. This team is special. There's something in this team, a fire to win, and at the same time, an energy and bond that's very special. "We keep talking about sticking to our processes in team meetings and doing whatever it takes to help Team India win. That's the entire goal of this team."

Talking about New Zealand legend Sophie Devine, Rodrigues said: "I remember watching her hit five sixes in a row at my first Under-19 camp at Chinnaswamy Stadium. It was incredible, and since then, I've always admired her game. We've prepared well to bowl against her, and now it's just about executing our plans." —*PTI*

Usha's claim of EC not felicitating Olympic medallists a lie: Yadav

NEW DELHI, 1 OCT

Indian Olympic Association Treasurer Sahdev Yadav on Tuesday hit back at president PT Usha for claiming that IOA Executive Committee members were not agreeing on a proposal to felicitate Paris Olympics medal-winners, saying her assertion is a "blatant lie".

Usha on Monday said that it was "deeply concerning" that the EC members failed to honor Olympic medallists and accused the Finance Committee of blocking funds intended to support Indian athletes' preparation for the Paris Games.

In a rebuttal to Usha's claims, Sahdev said, "... there has been no discussion with EC members nor any official proposal in writing for organizing a felicitation ceremony for the medallists of Paris Olympics 2024."

Sahdev, who is also the president of the Indian Weightlifting Federation, accused Usha of "spreading lies" and "cooking up" things instead of taking responsibility as per the IOA constitution."...we fail to understand why the IOA President is spreading lies across the whole country, to put down the EC members, which does not have any proof nor hold any genuine ground," he said. "... her repeated efforts and proposals are nothing but blatant lies which have been cooked by the President now and then and shedding crocodile tears in front of the media." —*PTI*

Mayank to lead K'taka in first two rounds

BENGALURU, 1 OCT

Out-of-favour India opener Mayank Agarwal was on Tuesday named as Karnataka's captain for their first two rounds of Ranji Trophy matches against Madhya Pradesh and Kerala, while pacer Prasidh Krishna will continue to chart his comeback to top-flight cricket through the domestic season.

Karnataka will face MP at Indore from October 11, while the former champions will take on Kerala at Bengaluru from 18 October.

After a lukewarm Duleep Trophy, Agarwal will be eager to be among some big runs to impress the selectors, and Prasidh too needs better numbers in the wicket column.

The 28-year-old took just four

Mayank Agarwal PHOTO: PTI

wickets across two matches in the Duleep Trophy while appearing for India A, and he so far has failed to pick up a wicket for the Rest of India in Mumbai's first innings in the ongoing Irani Cup at Lucknow.

Devdutt Padikkal too will be hoping to be among runs after a fairly impressive Duleep Trophy and pacer Vysakh Vijayakumar, who has a BCCI pace bowlers' contract, will be eager to make his presence felt with another good outing.

However, pacer Vidwath Kaverappa, who is nursing an injury, did not find a place in the 16-member squad.

There will be some focus on all-rounder Shreyas Gopal too as he has returned to the state after playing for Kerala last season.

Karnataka squad: Mayank Agarwal (captain), Nikin Jose, Devdutt Padikkal, R Smaran, Manish Pandey, Shreyas Gopal, Sujay Sateri, Hardik Raj, Vyshak Vijayakumar, Prasidh Krishna, Vasuki Koushik, Luvnith Sisodia, Mohsin Khan, Vidyadhar Patil, Kishan Bedare, Abhilash Shetty. Coach; K Yere Goud. —*PTI*

NEW ACL LAUNCHES

Women's soccer on a high

KUALA LUMPUR, 1 OCT

Women's soccer is on a high in Asia after some World Cup performances that captivated nations, raising expectations for the new AFC Champions League.

North Korea's win over Japan in the women's Under-20 World Cup last month has the women's game back in focus across the continent.

Australia's run to the semi-finals at the Women's World Cup it co-hosted last year with New Zealand drew record crowds and attention to the talent in the region.

Now, the continental club championship has been revamped and the group stage of the Women's Asian Champions League launches this week with the Urawa Red Diamond Ladies flying the flag

North Korean players celebrate with the trophy PHOTO: @THEAFCHUB

for Japan.

The Reds defeated South Korea's Incheon Red Angels in the final of the Women's Club Championship in May, a pilot tournament for the AFC's Women's Champions League, and would like nothing more than to repeat that success.

"To have two Asian nations in the (under-20) World Cup final is good for Asia and good for us, too, as we have rivals to compete with," Urawa coach Naoki Kusunose said.

"We are grateful for this new challenge in club soccer and we want to move on to the next step and win the Women's AFC Champions League."

The 12-team tournament, including four teams that advanced through a preliminary stage, is divided into three groups of four.

Urawa kicks off against India's Odisha on Thursday and will go on to face Ho Chi Minh City and Taiwanese team Taichung Blue Whale.

The Group C games will take place in Vietnam as each group is played in a single venue over nine days, with the top two advancing to the quarter-finals next March along with the two best third-placed teams. The semi-finals and final will be held in May of 2025. —*PTI*

Sirohi, Krishnav ready for AAC challenge in Japan

GOTEMBA, 1 OCT

Four Indians will be competing in the 2024 edition of the Asia-Pacific Amateur Championship with three of them trying their luck for the second consecutive year in the event, which offers handsome prize money to amateur golfers.

Krishnav Nikhil Chopra, who played college golf in the US, will be back for a second successive year along with Vedant Sirohi and Kartik Singh, a member of the International team at the junior Presidents Cup.

Rakshit Dahiya, who has had a fair amount of success on the home circuit of the Indian Golf Union, is the only debutant in the four-member team.

The 14-year-old Kartik was brimming with confidence having flown straight from

Krishnav Nikhil Chopra PHOTO: © ASIA PACIFIC GOLF

Canada, where he played the Junior Presidents Cup and secured 1.5 points out of three, as he lost in the four-ball, won the foursomes, and tied the singles.

"I have played in the US, but the Junior Presidents Cup and the Junior Players before that, were amazing, and it was a great experience," said Kartik, who won the Singapore Juniors and was third at Junior Players. —*PTI*